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George Duffield A.M.

In tali nunquam lassat venatio sylva.
A.D. 1884.



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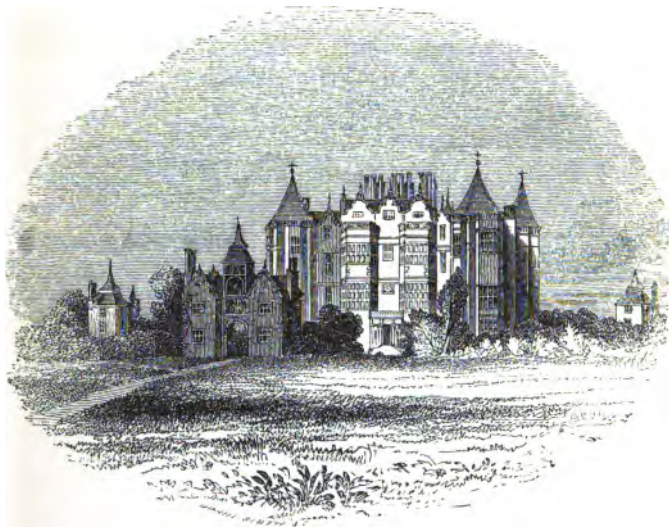
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THE

ART OF CONTENTMENT.

BY

LADY PAKINGTON.

A New Edition.

EDITED BY

THE REV. W. PRIDDEN, M.A.

VICAR OF BROXTED, ESSEX.



SECOND EDITION.

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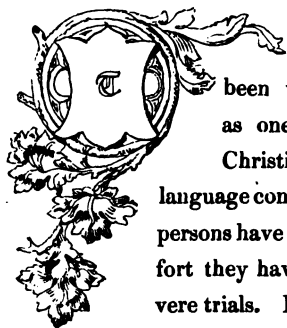
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HE treatise which is here reprinted has long been valued by good judges as one of the best practical Christian treatises which our language contains; and many religious persons have borne witness to the comfort they have found in it under severe trials. But it has become scarce, and is now difficult to be met with in a separate form. It is to be found among the collected works of the author of the *Whole Duty of Man*; an author whose writings will be treasured by the Christian reader as long as the English language is spoken, and wherever the English Church is known. But as these collected works, from their great bulk, are not accessible to the generality of readers, and they are not all of equal merit, selection has been made of one well-approved treatise, which seems to

b

offer a kind of religious advice best suited for these times.

The name of Dorothy, Lady Pakington, is now prefixed for the first time ; because it is presumed that the evidence ascribing it to that excellent person is sufficiently strong to warrant the appearance of her name in the title-page. It is certainly one of the most remarkable cases in the history of letters, that the name of the author of a series of treatises so popular should have remained so effectually concealed. Never were so many anonymous writings published with a design so pure. The opinion, however, which assigns them to Lady Pakington is not of any recent origin ; it has been handed down from the time of the first appearance of these writings ; it has lately become more general, and it is confirmed by private tradition, as well as some public testimonies.

It is well known that the house of Sir John Pakington, Bart., Westwood, in the county of Worcester, was a place of refuge in the time of Cromwell's usurpation to many eminent sufferers of the King's party, and especially to that pattern of Christian constancy and primitive zeal for the truth, Dr. Henry Hammond, whose life and writings remain

for the instruction of all ages that have come after. Here that great and good man was cherished for the last ten years of his life by the worthy owner of the mansion and his pious lady; and here, just before the restoration of the royal family, according to his own heart's prayer, he peacefully resigned his soul to his Maker, April 25, 1660.

It was known at the first appearance of these treatises, that the author was a friend of Hammond; and this is almost the only fact concerning the author, which can be said to have been certainly known. Lady Pakington's warm regard for her distinguished guest was such as to give her the best of all possible titles to be called his friend: it is instanced in other particulars mentioned in Bishop Fell's *Life of Hammond*, and more especially by the following impressive and affecting anecdote:

“There was one Houseman, a weaver by trade, but by weakness disabled too much to follow that or any other employment, who was an extreme favourite of Dr. Hammond's. Him he used with a most affectionate freedom, gave him several of his books, and examined his progress in them, invited him, nay, importuned him still, to come for whatever he needed, and at his death left him ten pounds as a legacy. A

little time before his death, he and the Lady Pakington being walking, Houseman happened to come by; to whom, after the Doctor had talked a while in his usual friendly manner, he let him pass; yet soon after called him back with these words: 'Houseman, if it should please God that I should be taken from this place, let me make a bargain between my lady and you, that you be sure to come to her with the same freedom you would to me for any thing you want.' And so with a most tender kindness gave him his benediction. Then turning to the lady, he said, 'Will you not think it strange I should be more affected at parting from Houseman than from you?' "1

It cannot be surprising that one whose Christian benevolence and discernment were thus appreciated by Hammond, should have been, as Fell relates of her, a person who delighted much in the attractive discourses of her guest, and who could imbibe their spirit. It has long been handed down and confidently received as a family tradition, and there is a small apartment in the top of the house at Westwood, which has always been pointed out as the room in which Lady Pakington, with the assistance

¹ Fell's Life of Hammond, ed. 1661. p. 162, 3.

of Dr. Hammond and Bishop Fell, arranged that excellent work, *The Whole Duty of Man*.¹

Lady Pakington was the daughter of Thomas, Lord Coventry, keeper of the great seal of England for the first sixteen years of the reign of Charles I. a man, as Clarendon testifies, of great abilities and the strictest integrity, whose death, in 1640, at the beginning of the Long Parliament, was looked upon as a singular misfortune to the King's cause. She was married to Sir John Pakington, a loyal and upright adherent to the same party, who, after the loss of 40,000*l.* expended in defence of his sovereign, and having been tried for his life under the government of the usurpers, lived to be returned member of parliament for his native county of Worcester in the first parliament which assembled upon the restoration. The attachment of Sir John Pakington to the suffering Church had been well proved in the days of her trial; as it appears that a friendly correspondence was constantly kept up between the house at Westwood and the loyal divines who were numbered among Hammond's friends, particularly Fell, Allestree, and the good and learned Bishop Sander-

¹ This is stated from information kindly communicated to the editors by John S. Pakington, Esq. of Westwood, M.P. for Droitwich.

son; and his joy, when the Church and episcopacy were restored, is strongly marked in the annals of the time. When Dr. George Morley, the newly appointed Bishop of Worcester, came, in September 1661, to take possession of his see, "the noble and loyal gentleman" rode out to meet him, two miles from the city, at the head of "his gallant troop of volunteers," and so escorted him onwards, till he was joined nearer Worcester by the lord lieutenant and a number of other loyalists, of the magistracy, gentry, and clergy of Worcestershire.¹ Lady Pakington appears to have lived many years in happy union with her husband; and dying in 1679, was buried near the grave of her friend Dr. Hammond, in the church of Hampton Lovel, the parish-church of Westwood. A memorial of her, inscribed on the monument of her grandson, speaks of her as exemplary for her piety and goodness, and justly reputed the authoress of the *Whole Duty of Man*.

The other authorities for attributing these writings to Lady Pakington may be briefly enumerated. The learned Dr. Hickes, whose troubled life did not prevent him from rendering the greatest aid to the cause of religion and letters, is said, in his early days,

¹ Letter from Worcester, dated September 14, 1661, in Kennett's *Chronicle*, p. 535.

to have been acquainted with the family at Westwood, and he speaks as with a personal recollection of the lady of the house, commemorating her virtues, and practical graces of her Christian life. "She had moreover," he says, "an excellent judgment, and a talent of speaking correctly, pertinently, clearly, and gracefully; in which she was so accomplished, particularly in an evenness of style and consistent manner of writing, that she deserved to be called and reputed the author of a book concerning the Duty of Man."¹ To this Ballard adds, in his *Memoirs of British Ladies*,² that a lady then living assured him that Dr. Hickes had informed her that he had seen the manuscript of the *Whole Duty of Man* written in her ladyship's own hand, which, from the many erasures, alterations, and interlinings, he was fully satisfied was the very original book. This manuscript is said to have been some time in the possession of Mrs. Eyre of Rampton, a daughter of Lady Pakington; it was interlined with corrections by Bishop Fell,³ who seems, from the part he took in these publications, to have been in the author's

¹ Pref. to his *Anglo-Saxon and Moeso-Gothic Grammars*, prefixed to his *Thesaurus*.

² Art. Lady Pakington.

³ Nash's *Hist. of Worcestershire*, vol. i. p. 352. ed. 1761.

secret. Mrs. Eyre always believed her mother to be the author of this work, and of the *Decay of Christian Piety*; but is said to have expressed herself doubtfully about the *Treatises*.¹ As, however, Bishop Fell published them all as the works of the same author, there seems no reason to question that the *Art of Contentment*, and the rest, proceeded from the same hand.

Should the general tenour of these works appear too learned to justify the supposition that the author was a lady, it must be borne in mind that female education in the days of Lady Pakington, though less general, went much deeper than in our own. Lady Jane Grey and Ethelreda Cecil had learnt to write and converse in Greek as readily as in English; and in the next century the sister of Sir Philip Sidney, Mary Countess of Pembroke, and Lucy Countess of Bedford, were as much distinguished for their learning as for their beauty and accomplishments.² It was not till a much later age and a more effeminate generation, after the Revolution, that fashionable gentlemen thought it requisite to decry female

¹ Ballard, as above.

² "Lady Pembroke wrote verse with grace and facility: her chief works, however," says William Gifford, "were works of piety, and her virtues went still before her talents." Ben Jonson's beautiful lines on Lucy, Countess of Bedford, "have

learning. A lady of talent, who had Sir Norton Knatchbull for her preceptor in youth, and Dr. Hammond, Bishops Fell and Morley, for her friends and correspondents in later life, might well be qualified to speak of books, and write on subjects, which formed no part of a lady's acquirements in the eighteenth century.

The careful and successful concealment of the the further merit," as the same good critic observes, "of being consonant to truth :"

" This morning, timely rapt with holy fire,

I thought to form unto my zealous Muse

What kind of creature I could most desire

To honour, serve, and love ; as poets use.

I meant to make her fair, and free, and wise,

Of greatest blood, and yet more good than great ;

I meant the day-star should not brighter rise,

Nor lend like influence from his lucent seat :

I meant she should be courteous, facile, sweet,

Hating that solemn vice of greatness, pride ;

I meant each softest virtue there should meet,

Fit in that softer bosom to reside.

Only a learned and a manly soul

I purposed her ; that should, with even powers,

The rock, the spindle, and the sheers control

Of Destiny, and spin her own free hours.

Such when I meant to feign, and wish'd to see,

My Muse bade BEDFORD write, and that was she !"

name is in itself the best proof that the motive of this excellent person was the benefit of her fellow-creatures, not the advancement of her own reputation. How much benefit she conferred upon her own generation by a series of treatises so popular, and so well calculated to heal the distempers of the time, by setting forth an orderly, and peaceable, and practical system of religion, "full of mercy and good fruits," in contrast to the bitter disputes and strifes of words, which had set the kingdom in a flame, we cannot now fully appreciate. The sterling English style in which these writings are composed, has attracted the notice of a modern celebrated critical journal, (not otherwise remarkable for its favourable opinion of English sacred literature), in which it is observed, that they contain scarcely a word or phrase which has become superannuated.¹ In a very few instances, where the change of time, since the first appearance of this treatise, seems to have left the meaning obscure, a few words of explanation have been added at the foot of the page.

Having thus introduced the treatise and its presumed authoress to the reader's notice, the editor's part might be concluded; but the importance of the subject here treated of, and its seasonableness to

¹ Edinburgh Review.

these times, have induced him to subjoin a few reflections of his own.

All must confess contentment to be a Christian duty; but few can deny that it is a duty which Englishmen in this nineteenth century are very apt to forget to cultivate. The reason of this fact is indeed, in some degree, to be found in human nature itself. It is not in the nature of man to be satisfied with what he possesses in this world; and too frequently he *will* not feel *contented*, because he *cannot* feel *satisfied*. But it is the Christian's duty, it is one of the lessons taught him by heavenly Wisdom, while he owns the insufficiency of earthly goods, to own likewise that these, insufficient as they are in themselves, and scantily as they may have been bestowed upon him, are, notwithstanding, *enough*: if the servant of God has ever so little of silver and gold, he may be *contented* with these; if he had ever so much, he could not have been perfectly *satisfied* with them. The chief inducement to contentment under our present lot, whatever that may be, is the possession of a sure and certain hope of better things in future; whereas one principal cause of a discontented spirit is, the absence of this hope; instead of which, how often is to be found

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a vague fretful expectation of some uncertain imaginary good, which, if obtained, must be ere long lost again,—of the imperfection of which, even whilst it is most eagerly desired, we are painfully conscious. A deep feeling of the unsatisfactory nature of every earthly object of desire has generally prevailed; and even during the gross darkness of heathen ignorance, there has shone forth a glimmering hope of escape from present evils, by which feeble light the minds of men have been cheered and lifted up with joyful thoughts of an approaching day of deliverance. Ever since the fall of Adam, the whole creation has been groaning, as it were, endeavouring to give birth to a better and more satisfying state of things than the present; and nations that have never known nor received the gospel have been earnestly desiring such future blessings as the gospel offers. “And not only they, but ourselves also,” who have received the promises of salvation, “even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body,”—the time when we shall be solemnly manifested to be the sons of God. Nor, though *contented*, can we be *satisfied* until this time. Blessed already with the first-fruits, we are yet earnestly desiring to gather in the harvest of God’s

mercies; eagerly do we look forwards to the day when our heavenly adoption shall be declared before men and angels,—when our bodies shall be for ever delivered from *sins*, and death, and corruption,—from those hateful influences, over which our victory in Christ will not be finally completed until “the trumpet shall sound.” Then, indeed, “we shall be changed.” Full of intense hope and anxiety respecting this approaching change, we may well remain indifferent to things temporal, considered in themselves; but this is not all, we may well feel contented and thankful in whatever situation God may have here placed us; because we have good reason to believe that situation to be the very one best adapted for us, most fitted to bring about the accomplishment of our heart's desire, and secure the completion of that final, that glorious change, to which all our thoughts are directed. Discontent very frequently arises from a feeling of *want*, rather than of positive *suffering*. The anticipation of the faithful member of Christ can overpower either of these causes of disturbance. A heart that is fixed upon “all the fulness of God” can afford to forget the temporal want to which it may now be exposed; a soul that is wrapt up in the contemplation of its heavenly inheritance has good cause for undervalu-

ing "the sufferings of this present time," when they are placed in comparison with "the glory that shall be revealed in us." The sight of that lofty, but not inaccessible height of Christian perfection, which rises up in eternal sunshine before us, is quite sufficient to carry us through the difficulties of the journey, to render us insensible of the privations or evils which it may fall to our lot to encounter by the way. We suffer as weak creatures, children of fallen parents, subject to vanity, brought under bondage to corruption. We shall be glorified as "children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together." And how can any, or all the sorrows and the wants,—the brief sorrows, the mere earthly wants,—of mortal men be brought at all into comparison with the rejoicing, the endless rejoicing, of the sons of God?

The hope which the Christian possesses is truly called an anchor of the soul; and it is by this hope alone that he can be protected from the continual fluctuation of spirits, the tossings to and fro, the alternations of vehement desire and disappointed expectation, whereby the minds of all who seek for satisfaction in worldly objects are sure to be agitated. In life there is always something wanting to render

life completely satisfactory. In infancy, the child eagerly desires to escape from that happy state, which is to others an object of envy and regret; he wishes for an increase of bodily powers, for an advancement in mental capacity; blind to the beauty, reckless of the fragrantcy, of those flowers by which his early path of existence is adorned,—insensible to the blithe melody which floats sweetly and freshly upon the breath of life's new-born day,—he turns away from the goods he possesses, and his thoughts are fixed upon those he possesses not; little are the delights of childhood valued, but his heart beats high with the future anticipations of the man. And when manhood at length arrives, are human beings at all nearer to the enjoyment of complete satisfaction? Can the flower of our strength, the noon-tide vigour of our day of life, the full perfection (so far as perfection can here be reached) of all our powers, whether of mind or body, can all these advantages suffice to fill up the craving void of our wishes, to satisfy "the earnest expectation of the creature?" Not they. And if these things were otherwise, as complete as they are incomplete, as excellent as they are imperfect, one thing must needs be wanting, which is *continuance*. What human being, conscious of the presence within him of an immortal soul, could

ever rest entirely satisfied with a strength that must soon decay, with a knowledge that shall speedily fail, a memory that must become weak, a life that must ere long depart, a body, however healthy and vigorous now, which a few, a very few, years will assuredly return, a mere mass of dust and ashes, unto the earth from which it came? In age, there is yet less to satisfy us. If the life that may possibly be measured by years, or even by scores of years, be brief and unsatisfactory, much more so the life which admits of no longer measurement, from season to season, than that of months, weeks, days, or hours. The young person desires what he has not yet; the middle-aged would fain keep or increase what he already possesses; but the old, "if in this world only he has hope," is, indeed, "of all men most miserable;" he fondly, vainly, bitterly regrets that which he has lost—that which, he well knows, is never to be regained. Thus it is that, without reference to any other outward circumstances, every age of life may be shewn to have its peculiar cause of anxiety, every stage of our earthly being its own feeling of unsatisfactoriness. Thus it is that "through fear of death we are all our lifetime subject to bondage."

Numberless are the other causes of want of satis-

faction in this life. which every age must feel and every person experience. In whatever quarter we may be tempted to "set up our nest on high," as though we could place ourselves above the reach of evil, in that quarter we are almost sure of being, sooner or later, disturbed and disappointed. There is nothing in our condition here at all capable of filling up the desires, and realising the anticipations, of a being originally created after the image of God, and gifted with a living soul. *Imperfection* is the mark set upon all things below. Now, we were at first made capable of *perfection*, and are still capable, through the Divine mercy, of being restored to our lost inheritance; whence arises in all men an anxious expectation of the future, a positive inability to rest entirely satisfied with what is before us. To these feelings we confess that Christ's followers are not less, nay, are even more, subject than other men. Whilst it is our duty and our wisdom to be contented *in* the world, it would be a vain and wicked attempt to aim at being contented *with* the world. And this is a difference always to be borne in mind, forming indeed one grand distinction between those that are and those that are not the servants of Christ. Like our great Example, we must be patient and resigned; we must meekly endure the present state of

things, although we "love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." Christ was *resigned* and *patient* in the highest degree; but was He *satisfied* with that world in which He condescended to dwell, with the disciples "of little faith," with the city over which He wept, with the hypocrites upon whom He denounced woe, with the murderers for whom He pleaded, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do?"

It may be assumed, then, that contentment will never dwell in a worldly mind, because there is nothing in the objects to which a mind of this description attaches itself that can furnish a foundation for this Christian feeling. But if it is impossible to cultivate a contented spirit whilst we look only at the things that are seen, there can be no cause for surprise at finding this happy spirit but rarely cultivated, since our thoughts are, in the present day, from various causes, more especially liable to be engrossed and bound up in the contemplation of things temporal. To withdraw the heart from the outward objects of sight, and to lift it up to those unseen but far better realities which are the objects of faith alone, should be the unceasing effort of every member of Christ; and one among many happy results of his endeavours will, in all probability, be a

contented mind : a blessing, *without which* all others are unavailing, and *with which* all others are superfluous.

But, I fear, the discontent of the present time springs mainly from the want of another requisite, rarely to be found yet indispensable to the attainment of true contentment. Before we can enjoy this tranquil happy state of mind, a lesson is to be learned, neither easy nor agreeable to our self-sufficient natures,—the duty of meek *submission to authority*, whether to God's direct authority, or to the same authority indirectly acting upon us through the instrumentality of those fellow-creatures whom He has thought fit to place over us. In both cases it is our duty to recognise and obey the power by which affairs are disposed ; and our so doing will most certainly render us contented under every arrangement of Providence : whereas, if we once give way to a habit of desiring to settle for ourselves what has been already settled for us, then farewell peace, farewell contentment. A rebellious self-sufficient spirit cannot be a contented one ; indeed, in this respect it is as sure to produce its own punishment as a meek and obedient disposition is certain of bringing with it its reward. In treating of a subject like that before us, it may seem

inexpedient even to allude to party-feelings. Christian contentment is a common ground, upon which (at least in theory) all parties may meet; nevertheless, at the hazard of appearing to provoke controversy, a few observations will be here offered, because they contain, it is verily believed, the truth; and that truth seriously reflected upon may, with the Divine blessing, prove useful to those whom it concerns.

Now there are many Englishmen who are avowedly fond of "meddling with those that are," in various ways, "given to change," whether in the Church or state, or, as it frequently happens, in both of these. Persons of this disposition, whatever may be their *private* virtues, are certainly, with regard to *public* affairs, very far from studying or practising the art of contentment; indeed, dissatisfaction often becomes their bond of union, and thus men are kept together in one party who differ entirely in their future plans, but agree in thinking that great changes are desirable. Too frequently is a total want of submission to authority, a reckless spirit of independence, displayed by such individuals; and with these proud feelings contentment is rarely found to dwell. Many apparent grievances, and some real ones, may freely be owned to exist;

and yet it by no means follows that *separation* from the Church, or a *perpetual effort to overthrow* the established order of things in the state, is hereby justified. Conduct of this kind is more likely to inflame and aggravate than to cure or diminish present evils. Imperfect beings must not reckon upon having perfect institutions; indeed these, however excellent in themselves, are sure to contract imperfection in the hands of us frail human creatures, for whose benefit they are designed; and a well-ordered mind, without in any degree foregoing its own privilege of judging, or its sober desire of real improvement, will always be disposed to submit to lawful authority, and to feel thankful for the acknowledged benefits, instead of perpetually dwelling upon the supposed grievances, of the established system. This disposition is no enemy to true reform, but it effectually checks wild innovation; for it teaches men, before they move, to consider well whither they are moving, and thoroughly to examine the comparative advantages and disadvantages of the intended change. Under the influence of this feeling, far from seeking after grievances with the keen ardour of one who has a delight in the chase, we shall rather lament them when they come in our way; and while we humbly and constantly pray God to remove those

blemishes which may disfigure our constitution in Church or state, we shall be quite content to wait His good pleasure ; we shall, as private individuals, abstain from " agitating " for the success of our own particular views ; we shall be far better occupied in returning thanks for the public blessings already bestowed upon us, and in endeavouring to use these to the most advantage both for ourselves and for others. Let those uneasy restless spirits, who have felt, as many must have felt, the unwholesome effects of the habits of continual change in which they have been living ; let those whose tongues are fatigued with murmuring, and their lives wearing away in complaints that are unavailing, only make the experiment of cultivating an humbler frame of mind, and they will soon become more contented with the present state of affairs ; nay, there will be more hope of their seeing these really altered for the better. The advocates of reckless change have always been the greatest enemies to improvement ; nor would it be less for their own private happiness than for the benefit of their country, if these excited spirits would learn the art of contentment in public matters. Some, it is true, have indulged in angry uneasy feelings, until the very indulgence has afforded them a certain morbid kind of enjoyment ; but no really wise

man, who had once experienced the sweet and tranquil feelings of Christian contentment and Christian submission to lawful authority, would ever wish again to forsake this rest for the soul, in order that he may "speak evil of the things that he understands not."

The same disposition, which will take off the edge of our feelings of public discontent, will also render us easy and contented in private life, always recollecting that it is not for us to question God's appointment, but "to do our duty in that state of life unto which it shall please Him to call us." Indeed, to speak the truth, want of submission to the Divine will must imply a certain want of faith. If we verily believe the great truths respecting God's government of the world, which are most forcibly brought before us in the following treatise, then we must be contented under all circumstances; and so far as we are deficient in this feeling, do we discover a want of full belief in those truths. God's glory is the first and highest object in the Christian's sight; and if that be our chief aim, we shall be quite contented, so long as that is forwarded and promoted, which may be done, indeed is often best done, under the pressure of earthly trials, and in the midst of evils and troubles: these, accordingly, need not dis-

turb, ought not to disturb, the peace of mind and contentment of the true believer. Indeed, when we turn to the evidence afforded by experience, where is it that the discontented are to be found? Is it among the zealous, devoted servants of Christ, or among those that know little or nothing beyond the mere name and profession of His holy religion? Is it in the life and conduct of the humble member of Christ's Church, or of the man who "leans upon his own understanding," that we see plainly developed the truth of the apostle's saying, "Godliness with contentment is great gain?"

Our Divine Master requires in us a disregard or indifference respecting worldly matters, and a simple child-like submission to lawful authority; and these two requisites, which form the chief materials of contentment, religion alone can supply. Thus, if contentment is the object of our search, we cannot be successful unless we call in the assistance of religion; but if religion is cultivated duly, contentment will follow in its train. The kingdom of God and his righteousness must, in the first instance, be anxiously sought after; and then, among the other things which will be added unto us, the blessing of a contented spirit will not be the least important or least valuable. The possession of this

will soothe the troubles and heighten the enjoyments of our present condition ; and when the mind of the believer is turned (as it often will be) towards a future state of more perfect satisfaction, confidently may he take up the words of the Psalmist, and say, " As for me, I will behold Thy presence in righteousness; and when I awake up after Thy likeness, I shall be satisfied with it."

W. PRIDDEN.

*Broxton Vicarage,
April 1841.*



A Prayer

FOR DILIGENCE AND RESIGNATION.

BY LADY FAKINGTON.

[The following prayer was copied from a MS. at Westwood, by a lady, whose name Ballard says he was not at liberty to mention, but whose veracity no one who was acquainted with her would ever call in question. (Ballard's *British Ladies*, p. 234-5.) By comparing it with other prayers, on the same subjects, in the *Whole Duty of Man*, the reader may perhaps form a judgment of the probability that they proceeded from one and the same author.]

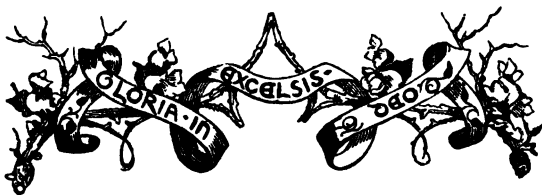
LORD, I beseech Thee to incline my soul to do and suffer Thy will, whatsoever it is, with that readiness, and courage, and cheerfulness here, with which they that do continually behold Thy face do always execute Thy commands delivered in heaven. For the time that it shall be Thy will that I attend Thy service here below, Lord, shew me the way that I should walk in, that I may not live unprofitably before Thee. Be Thou pleased to employ me as Thy servant, though most unworthy that honour, to bring in some glory to Thy name, some estimation to Thy holy faith whereunto I am called, some advantage to others, especially to those who are near unto me, some improvement in their spiritual eternal state, some fruit to my account, some ground of comfort and rejoicing to my own soul.

Lord, carry me safe, and unmoved, and undefiled, through all the unquiet billows and defilements of this life; and in all the exercises of my vigilancy, patience,

and constancy, do Thou continue to watch over me : not to permit me to fall off from them in any part through the deceitfulness of sin, the repeated importunity of the tempter, the empty terrors, or the allurements of the world, or the sloth and treachery of my own soul. Lord, it is Thy restraining grace from which I acknowledge to have received all the degrees of innocence ; Thy preventing and assisting, from which I have derived all the strength unto victory over my sin : and be Thou pleased to continue these securities of Thine to me every hour and minute of my life, that under the shadow of Thy wings I may rejoice, that by this armour of Thine I may have truce or victory over all my ghostly enemies.

And then, Lord, for viands of this short travail of mine, for the remainder of it, give me a heart to be satisfied and rejoice in my portion, be it the meanest that Thy wisdom, on the sight of my infirmities, shall see fittest to choose for me. And how long or how short space soever Thou shalt be pleased to continue me here, be pleased also to continue my thirst of Thee ; which, without forsaking my station, may anticipate the comfort and joy of beholding Thee ; that seeking and savouring of the things above, I may have my fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.





AUTHOR'S PREFACE.



THE desire of happiness is so coessential with our nature, so interwoven and incorporate with it, that nothing but the dissolution of the whole frame can extinguish it. This runs through the whole race of mankind, and, amidst the infinite variety of other inclinations, preserves itself entire. The most various contradictory tempers do yet conspire in this; and men of the most unequal fortunes are yet equal in their wishes of being happy.

But this concurrence, as to the end, is not more universal than the disagreement about the way. Every man would have happiness; but wherein that consists, or how it is to be attained, has been diversely opined; indeed the ultimate supreme happiness,

as it is originally inherent in God, so it is wrapt up in those clouds and darkness which, as the Psalmist says, are "round about him" (Ps. xviii. 11). And we can see nothing of it, but in those gleams and rays he is pleased to dart out upon us; so that all our estimates, as to our final felicity, must be measured by those revelations he has made of it.

But one would think our temporal happiness were as much a mystery as our eternal, to see what variety of blind pursuits are made after it. One man thinks it is seated on the top-pinnacle of honour, and climbs till perhaps he falls headlong. Another thinks it a mineral, that must be dug out of the earth, and toils to "lade himself with thick clay" (Hab. ii. 6), and at last finds a grave, where he sought his treasure. A third supposes it consists in the variety of pleasures, and wearies himself in that pursuit which only cloyes and disappoints. Yet every one of these can read you lectures of the gross mistake and folly of the other, whilst himself is equally deluded.

Thus do men chase an imaginary good, till they meet with real evils; herein exposing themselves to the same cheat Laban put upon Jacob,—they serve for Rachel, and are rewarded with Leah; court fancied beauty, and marry loathed deformity. Such delusive felicities as these are the largesses of the prince of the air, who once attempted to have inveigled even Christ himself (Matt. iv.).

But God's proposals are more sincere : he knows, how sandy, how false a foundation all these external things must make ; and therefore warns us not to build so much as our present satisfaction upon them ; but shews us a more certain, a more compendious way to acquire what we gasp after, by telling us, that as godliness in respect of the next, so " contentment " for this world " is great gain " (1 Tim. vi. 6). It is indeed the *unum necessarium*, the one point in which all the lines of worldly happiness are concentrated ; and to complete its excellence, it is to be had at home, nay, indeed, only there. We need not ramble in wild pursuits after it ; we may form it within our own breasts : no man wants materials for it, that knows but how to put them together.

And the directing to that skill is the only design of the ensuing tract ; which, coming upon so kind an errand, may at least hope for an unprejudiced reception. Contentment is a thing we all profess to aspire to, and therefore it cannot be thought an unfriendly office to endeavour to conduct men to it. How far the ensuing considerations may tend to that end, I must leave to the judgment and experience of the reader ; only desiring him that he will weigh them with that seriousness which befits a thing wherein both his happiness and duty are concerned ; for in this, as in many other instances, God has so twisted them together, that we cannot be innocently miser-

able. The present infelicities of our murmurs and impatiences have an appendent guilt, which will consign us to a more irreversible state of dissatisfaction hereafter.





The Art of Contentment.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE NECESSARY CONNEXION BETWEEN HAPPINESS AND CONTENTMENT.



OD, who is essentially happy in himself, can receive no accession to his felicity by the poor contributions of men. He cannot, therefore, be supposed to have made them upon intuition¹ of increasing, but communicating, his happiness. And this, his original design, is very visible in all the parts of his economy towards them. When lapsed man had counterplotted against himself, defeated the purpose of the Divine goodness, and plunged his whole nature into the opposite state of endless

¹ *Intuition*,—used commonly of mental view.

misery, he yet reinforced his first design, and, by an expedient as full of wonder as mercy, the death of his Son, recovers him to his former capacity of bliss. And, that it might not only be a bare capacity, he has added all other methods proper to work upon a rational creature; he has shewed him his danger, set before him in perspective that eternal Tophet which he is advised to shun. On the other side he has no less lively described the heavenly Jerusalem, the celestial country to which he is to aspire: nay, farther, has levelled his road to it; leads him not, as he did the Israelites through the wilderness, through intricate mazes to puzzle his understanding—through “a land of drought, wherein were fiery serpents and scorpions” (Deut. viii. 15), to discourage and affright him,—but has in the Gospel chalked out a plain, a safe, nay, a pleasant path,—as much superior, both in the ease of the way and in the end to which it leads, as heaven is to Canaan.

2. By doing this, he has not only secured our grand and ultimate happiness, but provided for our intermedial also. Those Christian duties which are to carry us to heaven are our refreshments, our *viaticum*² in our journey; his yoke is not to gall and fret us, but an engine by which we may with ease (and almost insensibly) draw all the clogs and incumbrances of human life. For whether we take Christianity in its whole complex, or in its several

² *Viaticum*,—provision for a journey.

and distinct branches, it is certainly the most excellent, the most compendious art of happy living : its very tasks are rewards, and its precepts are nothing but a divine sort of alchemy, to sublime at once our nature and our pleasures.

3. This may be evidenced in every particular of the evangelical law ; but having formerly made some attempt towards it in another tract,³ I shall not here reassume the whole subject ; I shall only single out one particular precept wherein happiness is not (as in the others) only implied, and must be caught at the rebound by consequence and event, but is literally expressed, and is the very matter of the duty—I mean the precept of acquiescence and contentment ; happiness and this true genuine contentment being terms so convertible, that to bid us be content is but another phrase for bidding us be happy.

4. Temporal enjoyments, such as are pleasure, wealth, honour, and the rest, though they make specious pretences to be the measure of human happiness, are all of them justly discarded by the philosopher in his Ethics, upon this one consideration, that, coming from abroad, they may be withheld or taken from us ; and our tenure being precarious, we even for that reason are unhappy in our most desirable possessions, because we are still liable to be so : and therefore he concludes, that felicity must be placed in the mind and soul, which stands without the reach of fortune ; and in the practice of

³ Decay of Christian Piety.

virtue, which in its own nature, and not in its contingent use, is truly good, and therefore certainly renders the possessors such.

5. But this practice being diffused through the whole extent of moral duty, Epictetus thought he had deserved well of human nature when he drew it up in two short words, to *sustain* and *abstain*; that is, to bear with constancy adverse events, and with moderation enjoy those that are prosperous: which complexure of philosophy is yet more fully, as well as more compendiously expressed in the single notion of contentment, which involves the patient bearing of all misadventures, and generous contempt of sensual illectives.⁴ This state of mind the Greeks express by calling it *αὐτάρκεια*, or *self-sufficiency*, which we know, properly speaking, is one of the incommunicable attributes of the Divine nature; and the Stoics expressly pretend, that by it mortal men are enabled to rival their god—in Seneca's phrase, to make a controversy with Jupiter himself. But abating the insolent blasphemy of an independent felicity, Christianity acknowledges a material truth in the assertion; and St. Paul declares of himself, that, having "learned how to want and how to abound, and in whatever state he happens to be in, therewith to be content, he is able to do all things through Christ that strengthens him" (Phil. iv. 11-13); "and having nothing, to possess all things" (2 Cor. vi. 10).

⁴ Enticements, allurements.

6. Which great event comes about, not only because all good things are eminently in the Divine nature, and he who by virtue and religion possesses Him, thereby in a full equivalence has every thing, but also upon human measures and the principles of philosophy; the compendious^b address to wealth, as Plato rightly observed, being not to increase possessions, but lessen desires; and, if so, it will follow that the contented man must be abundantly provided for, being so entirely satisfied with what he has, as to have no desires at all. Indeed, it is truly said of covetous men, and is equally verified of all who have any desire to gratify, that they want no less what they have than what they have not; but the reverse of that paradox is really made good by contentment, which bestows on men the enjoyment of whatever they have, and also whatever they have not; and, by teaching to want nothing, abundantly secures not to want happiness.

7. On the other side, this one grace being absent, it is not in the power of any success or affluence to make life a tolerable thing. Let all the materials of earthly happiness be amassed together and flung upon one man, they will, without contentment, be but like the fatal prize of Tarpeia's treason, who was pressed to death with the weight of her booty. He that has the elements of felicity, and yet cannot form them into a satisfaction, is more desperately miserable than he that wants them:

^b *Compendious*,—direct.

for he who wants has yet something to hope for, and thinks if he had them, he might be happy ; but he who insignificantly⁶ possesses them, has no reserve, has not so much as the flattery of an expectation ; for he has nothing left to desire, and yet can be as little said to enjoy.

8. He, therefore, that would have the extract, the quintessence of happiness, must seek it in content : all outward accessions are but the dross and earthy part ; this alone is the spirit, which, when it is once separated, depends not upon the fate of the other, but preserves its vigour when that is destroyed. St. Paul, whom I before mentioned, is a ready instance of it, who professes to be “ content in whatever state ;” contentment being not so inseparately linked to external things but that they may subsist apart. That those are often without it, we are too sure ; and that it may be without them is as certainly true, though by our own default we have not so many examples of it. A heart that rightly computes the difference between temporals and eternals, may resolve with the prophet, “ Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines ; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat ; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls ; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation” (Hab. iii. 17, 18). He that has God need not much deplore the want

⁶ *Insignificantly*,—without importance or effect.

of any thing else; nor can he that considers the plenty and glory of his future state be much dejected with the want or abjectness of his present.

9. Yet so indulgent is God to our infirmities, that, knowing how unapt our impatient natures are to "walk" only "by faith, and not at all by sight" (2 Cor. v. 7), he is pleased to give us fair antepasts⁷ of satisfaction here; dispenses his temporal blessings, though not equally, yet so universally, that he that has least has enough to oblige, not only his acquiescence, but his thankfulness. Though every man has not all he wishes, yet he has that which is more valuable than that he complains to want, nay, which he himself could worse spare, were it put to his option.

10. And now, from such a disposure of things, who would not expect that mankind should be the cheerfulest part of the creation? that the sun should not more "rejoice to run his course" (Ps. xix. 5), than man should to finish his; that a journey which has so blessed an end, and such good accommodation by the way, should be passed with all imaginable alacrity; and that we should live here practisers and learners of that state of unmixed interminable joys to which we aspire. But, alas! if we look upon the universality of men, we shall find it nothing so; but while all other creatures gladly follow the order of their creation, take pleasure in those things God has assigned for them, we,

⁷ *Antepast*,—a foretaste.

with sullen perverseness, quarrel at what we should enjoy, and in every thing make it our business not to fit it for our use, but to find some concealed quality which may render it unfit. We look insidiously upon our blessings; like men that are designed only to pick a quarrel and start a pretence for mutinying. From hence it is that man, who was designed the lord of the world, to whose satisfactions all inferior beings were to contribute, is now the unhappiest of the creatures; nay, as if the whole order of the universe were inverted, he becomes slave to his own vassals, courts all those sublunary things with such passion, that, if they prove coy and fly his embraces, he is mad and desperate; if they fling themselves into his arms, he is then glutted and satiated; like Amnon, "he hates more than he loved" (2 Sam. xiii. 15), and is sicker of his possession than he was of his desire.

11. And thus will it ever be till we keep our desires more at home, and not suffer them to ramble after things without reach. That honest Roman, who from his extraordinary industry upon his little spot of ground received such an increase as brought him under suspicion of witchcraft, is a good example for us. God has placed none of us in so barren a soil, in so forlorn a state, but there is something in it which may afford us comfort; let us husband that to the utmost, and it is scarce imaginable what improvements even he that appears the most miserable may make of his condition. But if in a sullen

humour we will not cultivate our own field, because we have perhaps more mind to our neighbour's, we may thank ourselves if we starve. The despising of what God has already given us, sure is but cold invitation to farther bounty. Men are indeed forced sometimes to reward the mutinous ; but God is not to be so attacked, nor is it that sort of violence which can ever force heaven. The heathen could say that Jupiter sent his plagues among the poorer sort of men because they were always repining ; and indeed there is so much truth in the observation, that our impatience and discontent at our present condition is the greatest provocation to God to make it worse.

12. It must, therefore, be resolved to be very contrary to our interest, and surely it is no less to our duty. It is so, if we do but own ourselves men, for in that is implied a subordination and submission to that Power which made us so ; and to dispute his management of the world, to make other distributions of it than he has done, is to renounce our subjection, and set up for dominion. But this is yet more intolerable as we are Christians ; it being a special part of evangelical discipline cheerfully to conform to any condition, to " know how to be abased and how to abound, to be full and to be hungry" (Phil. iv. 12), " to be careful for nothing" (ver. 6). Nay, so little does Christ give countenance to our peevish discontents, our wanton outcries when we are not hurt, that he requires more

than a contentment, an exultancy and transport of joy under the heaviest pressures, under reproaches and persecutions; "Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy" (Luke vi. 23). And sure nothing can be more contrary to this than to be always whining and complaining; crying, in the prophet's phrase, "my leanness, my leanness, wo is me" (Is. xxiv. 16); when perhaps Moses' simile does better fit our state, "Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked" (Deut. xxxii. 15).

13. And as this querulous humour is against our interest and duty, so it is visibly against our ease. It is a sickness of the mind, a perpetual gnawing and craving of the appetite, without any possibility of satisfaction; and indeed is the same in the heart which the *caninus appetitus*⁸ is in the stomach; to which we may aptly enough apply that description we find in the prophet, "he shall snatch on the right hand, and be hungry, and he shall eat on the left, and not be satisfied" (Isaiah ix. 20). Where this sharp, this fretting humour abounds, nothing converts into nourishment—every new accession does but excite some new desire; and, as it is observed of a trencher-fed dog, that he tastes not one bit for the greedy expectation of the next, so a discontented mind is so intent upon his pursuits, that he has no relish of his acquests.⁹ So that what the prophet speaks of the covetous, is equally applicable to all other sorts of malcontents: "he enlarges

⁸ A dog's appetite; a disease of inordinate hunger.

⁹ *Acquest*,—the thing gained.

his desire as hell, and is as death, and cannot be satisfied" (Hab. ii. 5). And sure if the "desire accomplished" be, as Solomon says, "sweet to the soul" (Prov. xiii. 19), it must be exceedingly bitter to be thus condemned to endless unaccomplishable desires; and yet this is the torture which every repining, discontented spirit provides for itself.

14. What a madness is it, then, for men to be so desperately bent against their interest and duty as to renounce even their ease too for company! One would think this age were sensual enough to be at defiance with the least shadow of uneasiness. It is so, I am sure, where it ought not; every thing is laborious when it is in compliance with their duty. A few minutes spent in prayer, "O, what a weariness is it!" (Mal. i. 13.) If they chance but to miss a meal, they are ready to cry out, their "knees are weak through fasting" (Ps. cix. 23); yet they can, without regret or any self-compassion, macerate and cruciate¹⁰ themselves with anxious cares and vexations, and, as the apostle speaks (1 Tim. vi. 10), "pierce themselves through with many sorrows." That proposal, therefore, which was very rashly made by St. Peter to our Saviour, "Master, pity thyself" (Matt. xvi. 12), which we render "be it far from thee," would here be an advised motion to the generality of mankind, who are commonly made unhappy, not by any thing without them, but by those restless impatiences that are within them.

¹⁰ *Macerate*,—to make lean; *cruciate*,—to torment.

15. It may therefore be a seasonable office to endeavour the appeasing these storms, by recalling them to those sober rational considerations, which may shew as well the folly as uneasiness of this repining, unsatisfiable humour. It is certain that in true reasoning we can find nothing whereon to found it, but a great deal to enforce the contrary. Indeed, it is so much against the dictate of reasonable nature to affect damage, sin, and torment, that, were there nothing else to be said but what I have already mentioned, it might competently discover the great unreasonableness of this sin.

16. But we need not confine our appeal to reason, as it is only a judge of utility and advantage, but enlarge it to another notion, as it is judge of equity and right; in which respect also it gives as clear and peremptory a sentence against all murmuring and impatience. To evince this, I shall insist upon these particulars: First, that God is debtor to no man, and therefore whatever he affords to any, it is upon bounty, not of right—a benevolence, not a due. Secondly, that this bounty is not strait or narrow, confined to some few particular persons, and wholly overskiping the rest, but more or less universally diffused to all; so that he who has the least cannot justly say but he has been liberally dealt with. Thirdly, that if we compare our blessings with our allays,¹¹ our good things with our evil, we shall find our good far surmounting. Fourthly,

¹¹ *Allay*,—abatment, baser metal mixed in coinage.

that we shall find them yet more so, if we compare them with the good we have done; as, on the contrary, we shall find our afflictions scarce discernible if balanced with our sins. Fifthly, that as God is the rector of the universe, so it appertains to him to make such allotments, such distributions, as may best preserve the state of the whole. Sixthly, that God, notwithstanding that universal care, has also a peculiar aspect on every particular person, and disposes to him what he discerns best for him in special. Seventhly, if we compare our adversities with those of other men, we shall always find something that equals, if not exceeds, our own. All these are certain irrefragable truths, and there is none of them single but may, if well pressed upon the mind, charm it into a calmness and resignation; but when there is such a conspiracy of arguments, it must be a very obstinate perverseness that can resist them; or, should they fail to enforce a full conviction, will yet introduce those subsidiary proofs which I have to allege so advantageously, as will, being put together, amount unto perfect and uncontrollable evidence.





CHAPTER II.

OF GOD'S ABSOLUTE SOVEREIGNTY.



THE first proposition, that God is debtor to no man, is too clear and apparent to require much of illustration; for as he is a free agent, and may act as he pleases, so he is the sole proprietary, and can wrongfully detain from none; because all original right is in himself. This has been so much acknowledged by the blindest heathens, that none of them durst make insolent addresses to their gods, challenge any thing of them as of debt, but by sacrifices and prayers owned their dependence and wants, and implored supplies. And sure Christianity teaches us not to be more saucy. If those deities, who owed their very being to their votaries, were yet acknowledged to be the spring and source of all, we can with no pretence deny it to that Supreme Power in "whom we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts xvii. 28). For if it were merely an act of his choice to give us a being, all his subsequent bounties can have no other original

than his own good pleasure. We could put no obligation upon God before we were; and when we began to be, we were his creatures, and so by the most indisputable right owe ourselves to him, but can have no antecedent title on which to claim any thing from him; so that the apostle might well make the challenge which he doth on God's behalf, "Who hath given any thing unto him, and it shall be recompensed to him again?" (Rom. xi. 35.)

2. Now, ordinary discretion teaches us not to be too bold in our expectation from one to whom we can plead no right. It has as little of prudence as of modesty, to press impudently upon the bounty of a patron, and does but give him temptation, at least pretence, to deny. And if it be thus with men, who possibly may sometimes have an interest, sometimes a vanity, to oblige us, it must be much more so towards God, who cannot be in want of us, and therefore need not buy us: "Our good," as the Psalmist speaks, "extends not to him" (Ps. xvi. 2). He has a fundamental right in that little we are, which will stand good, though it should never be corroborated by greater benefits. With what an humble bashfulness should we then sue for any thing, who have no argument to invite the least donation, being already so pre-engaged, that we cannot mortgage so much as ourselves in consideration of any new favour! And surely extravagant hopes do very ill befit people in this condition. We see the modesty of good Mephibosheth,

who, though he was by a slanderous accusation outed of half the estate David had given him, yet, upon a reflection that he derived it all from his good pleasure, disputed not the sentence, but cheerfully resigned the whole to the same disposure from which he received it, saying, "Yea, let him take all" (2 Sam. xix. 30). A rare example, and fit for imitation, as being adapted to the present case, not only in that one circumstance of his having received all from the king, but also in that of the attainder of his blood, which he confesses in the former part of the verse;¹ for "all of my father's house were but dead men before my lord." And, alas, may we not say the very same? Was not our whole race tainted in our first parent? So that if God had not the primary title of vassalage, he would in our fall have acquired that of confiscation and escheat. And can we think ourselves, then, in terms to capitulate and make our own conditions, and expect God should humour us in all our wild demands?

3. This is indeed to keep up that old rebellion of our progenitor; for that consisted in a discontent with that portion God had assigned him, and coveting what he had restrained him. Nay, indeed, it comes up to the height of the devil's proposal, the attempting "to be as God" (Gen. iii. 5). For it is an endeavour to wrest the management out of his hands, to supersede his authority of dispensing to us, and to carve for ourselves. This is so mad

¹ Rather at verse 28.

an insolence, that, were it possible to state a case exactly parallel between man and man, it would raise the indignation of any that but pretended to ingenuity.² Yet this is, without hyperbole, the true meaning of every murmuring, repining thought we entertain.

4. But, as bad as it is, who is there of us that can in this particular say, "We have made our heart clean?" (Prov. xx. 9.) It is true we make some formal acknowledgment sometimes that we receive all from God's gift. Custom teaches us from our infancy, after every meal we eat, to give him thanks (though even that is now thought too much respect, and begins to be discarded as unfashionable); yet sure he cannot be thought to do that in earnest, that has all the time of his eating been grumbling that his table abounds not with such delicacies as his neighbour's. And yet at this rate, God knows, are most of our thanksgivings. Indeed, we have not so much ordinary civility to God as we have to men. The common proverb teaches us not too curiously to pry into the blemishes of what is given us; but on God's gifts we sit as censors, nicely examine every thing which is any way disagreeable to our fancies, and, as if we dealt with him under the notion of chapmen, disparage it, as Solomon says buyers use to do: "It 's naught, it is naught, saith the buyer" (Prov. xx. 14). Nay, we seem yet more absurdly to change

² *Ingenuity*,—openness, fairness.

the scene ; and, as if God were to make oblations to us, we as critically observe the defects of his benefactions as the Levitical priests were to do those of the sacrifice, and, like angry deities, scornfully reject whatever does not perfectly answer our wanton appetites.

5. And now, should God take us at our words, withdraw all those blessings which we so fastidiously despise, what a condition were we in ! It is sure we have nothing to plead in reverse of that judgment. There is nothing in it against justice ; for he takes but his own. This he intimates to Israel : “ I will return and take away my corn in the time thereof, and my wine in the season thereof, and will recover my wool and my flax ” (Hos. ii. 9). In which he asserts his own propriety, “ my corn, my wine,” &c., and recalls them to the remembrance that they were but usufructuaries,³ and it is as evident that our tenure is but the same. Nay, this proceeding would not be repugnant even to mercy, for even that is not obliged still to prostitute itself to our contempt. I am sure such a tolerance is beyond all the measures of human lenity. Should any of us offer an alms to an indigent wretch, and he, when he sees it is silver, should murmur and exclaim that it is not gold,—would we not draw back our hand and reserve our charity for a more worthy object ? It is true, indeed, God’s thoughts are not as our

³ *Usufructuary*,—one that has the use and temporary profit, not the property, of a thing.

thoughts, nor our narrow bowels equal measures for the Divine compassions; and we experimentally find that his long-suffering infinitely exceeds ours; yet we know he does in the parable of the lord and the servant (Matt. xviii.) declare, that he will proportion his mercy by ours in that instance; and we have no promise that he will not do it in this—nay, we have all reason to expect that he should; for, since his wisdom prompts him to do nothing in vain, and all his bounty to us is designed to make us happy, when he sees that end utterly frustrated by our discontents, to what purpose should he continue that to us which we will be never the better for?

6. Besides, though he be exceedingly patient, yet he is not negligent or insensible; he takes particular notice, not only with what diligence we employ, but with what affections we resent⁴ every of his blessings. And as ingratitude is a vice odious to men, so it is extremely provoking to God; so that in this sense also the words of our Saviour are most true, “from him that hath not,” *i. e.* that hath not a grateful sense and value, “shall be taken away even that he hath” (Matt. xxv. 29). But we may find a threatening of this kind yet more express to Israel, “because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with gladness and with joyfulness of heart for the abundance of all things, therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies, whom the Lord God will send among thee,

⁴ *Resent*,—to take well, or ill: now generally used in the latter sense.

in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things" (Deut. xxviii. 47, 48),—a sad and dismal inversion, yet founded wholly in the want of that cheerful recognition which God expected from them. And if Israel, the lot of his own inheritance, that people whom he had singled out from all the nations of the world, could thus forfeit his favour by unthankfulness, sure none of us can suppose we have any surer entail of it. In a word, as God loves a cheerful giver, so he also loves a cheerful receiver—one that complies with his end in bestowing, by taking a just complacence in his gifts. But the querulous and unsatisfied reproach his bounty, accuse him of illiberality and narrowness of mind; so that he seems, even in his honour, engaged to bring them to a righter apprehension of him, and by a deprivation teach them the value of those good things which they could not learn by the enjoyment.

7. If, therefore, ingenuity and gratitude cannot, yet at least let prudence and self-love, engage us against this sin of murmuring, which we see does abundantly justify the character the wise man gives, when he tells us "it is unprofitable" (Wisd. i. 11); he might have said pernicious also, for so it evidently is in its effects. Let us, then, arm ourselves against it, and to that purpose impress deeply upon our minds the present consideration, that God owes us nothing, and that whatever we receive is an alms, and not a tribute. Diogenes being asked what wine drank the most pleasant? answered, that which is

drunk at another's cost. And this circumstance we can never miss of to recommend our good things to us,—for, be they little or much, they come gratis. When, therefore, in a pettish mood, we find ourselves apt to charge God foolishly, and to think him strait-handed towards us, let us imagine we hear God expostulating with us, as the householder in the parable, “Friend, I do thee no wrong: is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?” (Matt. xx. 13, 15.) If God have not the right of disposing, let us find out those that have, and see how much better we shall speed; but if he hath, let us take heed of disputing with him: we that subsist merely by his favour, had need court and cherish it by all the arts of humble observance. Every man is ready to say how ill beggary and pride do agree. The first qualification we cannot put off; O let us not provide it of the other so inconvenient, so odious an adjunct: let us leave off prescribing to God (which no ingenuous man would do to an earthly benefactor); and let us betake ourselves to a more holy and successful policy, the acknowledgment of past mercies, and our own unworthiness. This was Jacob's method, “I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which thou hast shewed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands;” and with this humble preface he introduces his petition for rescue in his present distress, “Deliver me, I pray thee, from the

hand of my brother," &c. (Gen. xxxii. 10, 11): an excellent pattern of divine rhetoric, which the success demonstrates to have been very prevalent; and we cannot transcribe a better copy to render our desires as successful. Indeed, we are so utterly destitute of all arguments from ourselves, that we can make no reasonable form of address, if we found it not in something of God—and there is nothing even in him adapted to our purpose but his mercy; nor can that be so advantageously urged by any thing as by the former instances it has given of itself; for as God only is fit to be a precedent to himself, so he loves to be so. Thus, we find not only Moses but God often recollecting his miraculous favours towards Israel as an argument to do more: let us therefore accost him in his own way, and, by a frequent and grateful recounting of his former mercies, engage him to future. Nor need we be at a loss for matter of such recollection, if we will but seriously consider what we have already received; which is the subject of the next chapter.





CHAPTER III.

OF GOD'S UNLIMITED BOUNTY.



T is the known character of an unworthy nature to write injuries in marble and benefits in dust; and however some (as Seneca well observes) may acquit themselves of this imputation as to man, yet scarce any do so in relation to God. It is true, indeed, the charge must be a little varied, for God neither will nor can do us injury; yet we receive any thing that is adverse with such a resentment as if it were, and engrave that in our memories with indelible characters, whilst his great and real benefits are either not at all observed, or with so transient an advertence, that the comparison of dust is beyond our pitch, and we may be more properly said to write them in water. Nay, so far are we from keeping records and registers of his favours, that even those standing and fixed ones which sense can prompt us to (without the aid of our memories) cannot obtain our notice.

2. Were it not thus, it were impossible for men to be so perpetually in the complaining key, as if

their voices were capable of no other sound. One wants this, and another that, and a third something beyond them both, and so on *ad infinitum*; when all this while every one of them enjoys a multitude of good things without any remark. That very breath wherewith they utter their complaints is a blessing, and a fundamental one too; for if God should withdraw that, they were incapable of whatsoever else they either have or desire. It is true, that some men's impatiences have risen so high as to cast away life, because it was not clothed with all circumstances they wished. Yet these are rare instances, and do only shew such men's depraved judgment of things. A rich jewel is not the less valuable because a madman in his raving fit flings it into the fire; but as to the generality of men, the devil (though a liar) gave a true account of their sense when he said, "Skin for skin; and all that a man hath will he give for his life" (Job ii. 4). And though, perhaps, in an angry fit many men have, with Jonah (chap. iv. 3), "wished to die," yet, ten to one, should death then come, they would be as willing to divert it as was the man in the apologue, who, wearied with his burden of sticks, flung it down and called for death; but when he came, owned no other occasion for him but to be helped up again with his bundle. I dare in this appeal to the experience of those who have seemed very weary of life, whether, when any sudden danger has surprised them, it has not as suddenly altered their mind, and

made them more desire life than before they abhorred it. It is the common saying, as long as there is life, there is hope: there is so, as to secular concerns, for what strange revolutions do we often see in the age of man! from what despicable beginnings have many arrived to the most splendid conditions!—of which we have divers modern as well as ancient instances: and, indeed, it is admirable to see what time and industry will (with God's blessing) effect: "but there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave" (Eccles. ix. 10); we can improve no more when we are once transplanted thither.

3. But this is yet much more considerable in respect of our spiritual state. Our life is the "day wherein we are to work" (yea, to work out our salvation); but "when the night comes" (when death overtakes), "no man can work" (John ix. 4). Now, alas, when it is considered how much of this day the most of us have loitered away, how many of us have stood idle till the sixth or ninth hour, it will be our concern not to have our day close before the eleventh. Nay, alas, it is yet worse with us: we have not only been idle, but very often ill-busied; so that we have a great part of our time to unravel, and that is not to be done in a moment. For though our works may fitly enough be represented by the prophet's comparison of a "spider's web" (Is. lix. 5), yet they want the best property even of that—they cannot be so soon undone. Vices that are radicated

by time and custom lie too deep to be lightly swept away. It is no easy thing to persuade ourselves to the will of parting with them. Many violences we must offer to ourselves, a long and strict course of mortification must be gone through, ere we can find in our hearts to bid them be gone; and yet when we do so, they are not so tractable as the centurion's servants: they will indeed come whenever we bid them, but they will scarce go so; they must be expelled by force and slow degrees; we must fight for every inch of ground we gain from them: and as God would not assist the Israelites to subdue the Canaanites at once (Deut. vii. 22), so neither ordinarily does he us to master perfectly our corruptions. Now, a process of this difficulty is not to be despatched on a sudden. And yet this is not all our task; for we have not only ill habits to extirpate, but we have also good ones to acquire: it is not a mere negative virtue will serve our turns, nor will empty lamps enter us into the marriage-chamber (Matt. xxv. 10). "We must add to our faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance," &c. (2 Pet. i. 5.) No link must be wanting of that sacred chain; but we must, as the same apostle advises, "be holy in all manner of conversation" (1 Pet. i. 15).

4. And now I would desire the reader seriously to consider, whether he can upon good grounds tell himself that this so difficult (and yet so necessary) a work is effectually wrought in him. If it be, he is a

happy man, and can with no pretence complain of any external want: he that is fed with manna must be strangely perverse if he murmur for a bellyful of "leeks and onions" (Num. xi. 5.); but, on the contrary, he owes infinite thanks to God, that has spared him time for this important business, and did not put a period to his natural life before he had begun a spiritual; for I fear there are among the best of us few of so entire an innocence but they may remember some either habits or acts of sin, in which it would have been dreadful for them to have been snatched away. And then, how comprehensive, how prolific a mercy has life been to them, when it has carried eternity in its womb, and their continuance on earth has qualified them for heaven! Neither are such persons only to look on it as a blessing in the retrospect, as it relates to the past, but also in the present and future,—which, if they continue to employ well, does not only confirm but advance their reward. Besides, God may please by them to glorify himself, make them instrumental to his service, which as it is the greatest honour, so it is also the greatest satisfaction to a good heart. He shews himself too mercenary that so longs for his reward as to grow impatient of his attendances: he that loves God thinks himself blessed in the opportunity of doing work, as well as in receiving wages. Thus we see how life is, under all these aspects, a mercy to a pious man, and such as not only obliges him to contentment, but gratitude.

5. But supposing a man cannot give this comfortable account of his life, but is conscious that he has spent it to a very different purpose, yet does not that at all lessen his obligations to God, who meant he should have employed it better; and that he has not done so is merely his own fault. Nay, indeed, the worse his state is, the greater mercy it is that God has not made it irreversible, that he has not cut him off at once from the earth and the possibility of heaven too, but affords him yet a longer "day, if yet he will hear his voice" (Ps. xcv. 7). This long-suffering is one of the most transcendent acts of Divine goodness, and therefore the apostle rightly styles it "the riches of his goodness, and long-suffering, and forbearance" (Rom. ii. 4); and so at last we commonly acknowledge it, when we have worn it out, and can no longer receive advantage by it. What a value does a gasping, despairing soul put upon a small parcel of that time which before he knew not how fast enough to squander! O that men would set the same estimate on it before! and then certainly, as it would make them better husbands of it, so it would also render them more thankful for it, "accounting that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation" (2 Pet. iii. 15).

6. Indeed, did men but rightly compute the benefit of life upon this score, all secular incumbrances and uneasinesses of it would be overwhelmed, and stand only as ciphers in the account. What a shame is it, then, that we should spend our

breath in sighs and outcries, which, if we would employ to those nobler ends for which it was given, would supersede our complaints, and make us confess we were well dealt with; that "our life" (though bare and stripped of all outward accessories) "is given us for a prey" (Jer. xlv. 5). And, indeed, he that has yet the great work of life to do, can very ill spare time or sorrow to bestow upon the regretting any temporal distress, since his whole stock is little enough to bewail and repair his neglects of his eternal concerns. Were all our lives, therefore, destitute of all outward comfort, nay, were they nothing but a scene of perpetual disasters, yet this one advantage of life would infinitely outweigh them all, and render our murmurings very inexcusable.

7. But God has not put this to the utmost trial, has never placed any man in such a state of unmixed calamity, but that he still affords many and great allays. He finds it fit sometimes to defalk¹ some of our outward comforts, and perhaps embitter others; but he never takes all away. This must be acknowledged, if we do but consider how many things there are in which the whole race of mankind do in common partake. The four elements, fire and water, air and earth, do not more make up every man's composition than they supply his needs: the whole host of heaven, the sun, moon, and stars, Moses will tell us, are by "God divided to all nations under the whole heaven" (Deut. iv.

¹ To *defalk*,—to cut off, to lop away.

19). Those resplendent bodies equally afford their light and influence to all. The sun shines as bright on the poor cottage as on the most magnificent palace; and the stars have their benign aspects as well for him that "is behind the mill as for him that sitteth on the throne" (Ex. xi. 5). Propriety² (that great incendiary below) breeds no confusion in those celestial orbs; but they are every man's treasure, yet no man's peculiar; as if they meant to teach us, that our love of appropriation "descends not from above" (Jam. iii. 15), is no heavenly quality.

8. And as they make no distinction of the ranks and degrees of men, so neither do they of their virtues. Our Saviour tells us, God causes "his sun to rise on the good and on the evil, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matt. v. 45). If now we descend lower, to the sublunary creatures, they equally pay their homage to man, do not disdain the dominion of the poor and submit to that of the rich, but shew us that their instinct extends to the whole nature. A horse draws the poor man's plough as tamely as the prince's chariot; and the beggar's hungry cur follows him with as much obsequiousness and affection as the pampered lap-dogs of the nicest ladies. The sheep obey a poor mercenary shepherd as well as they did the daughters of the wealthy Laban (Gen. xxix. 9), or of Jethro, a prince (Exod. ii. 16); and as willingly

² *Propriety*,—exclusive right.

yield their fleeces to clothe Lazarus as to make purple for Dives. And as animals, so vegetables are as communicative of their qualities to one man as another. The corn nourishes, the fruits refresh, the flowers delight, the simples cure the poor man as well as the rich.

9. But I foresee it will be objected that these natural privileges are insignificant, because they are evacuated by those positive laws which bound propriety, and that therefore, though one man could use the creatures as well as another, yet every man has them not to use. I answer, that for some of the things I have mentioned they are still in their native latitude, cannot be enclosed or monopolised. The most ravenous oppressor could never yet lock up the sun in his chest: "he that lays house to house, or land to land, till there be no place" (Is. v. 8), cannot enclose the common air. And the like may be said of divers of the rest; so that there are some (and those no mean) blessings, which continue still the indefeasible right of mankind in general.

10. As for those other things which are liable to the restrictive terms of *mine* and *thine*, it is not to be denied but there is vast difference in the dispensing them; as great as Nathan's parable describes, when he speaks of the numerous flocks of the rich man, and the "single ewe-lamb of the poor" (2 Sam. xii. 23): yet there is scarce any so deplorably indigent but that by one means or other he has, or may have, the necessary supports of life.

Perhaps they fall not into his lap by birthright and inheritance, yet they are acquirable by labour and industry, which is perhaps the better tenure. They cannot, it may be, arrive to "Sodom's fulness of bread," yet if they have not her "abundance of idleness" (Ez. xvi. 49), they commonly need not want that which was the height of Agur's wish, "food convenient" (Prov. xxx. 8). It is true, indeed, if they will fold their hands in their bosom, if, with Solomon's "sluggard, they will not plough by reason of the cold," they must take his fate in the summer, as they have his ease in the winter, "they may beg in harvest, and have nothing" (Prov. xx. 4). But then it is visible they are the authors of their own necessities. And, indeed, to men of such lazy, careless natures, it is hard to say what degree of God's bounty can keep them from want, since we often see the fairest fortunes dissipated as well by the supine negligence as the riotous prodigality of the owners; and therefore, if men will be idle, they are not to accuse God, but themselves, if they be indigent.

11. But, then, there is one case wherein men seem more inevitably exposed, and that is when by age, sickness, or decrepitude, they are disabled from work, or when their family is too numerous for their work to maintain. And this, indeed, seems the most forlorn state of poverty; yet God has provided for them also, by assigning such persons to the care of the rich: nay, he has put an extra-

ordinary mark of favour on them, given them the honour of being his proxies and representatives, made them letters of attorney, as it were, to demand relief in his name, and upon his account. And though it is too true, that even that authority will not prevail with many of the rich to open their purses, yet, even in this age of frozen charity, there are still some who remember upon what terms they received their wealth, and employ it accordingly. And though the number of them is not so great as were to be wished, yet there are in all parts some scattered here and there, like "cities of refuge" in the land (Deut. xix. 23), to which these poor distressed creatures may flee for succour. And I think I may say, that between the legal provisions that are made in this case and voluntary contributions, there are not very many that want the things that are of absolute necessity; and we know St. Paul comprises those in a small compass, "food and raiment," and proposes them as sufficient materials of content (1 Tim. vi. 8). I say not this to contract any man's bowels, or lessen his compassions to such poor wretches. For how much soever they lend, I wish, as Joab did in another case to David, the Lord "increase it a hundredfold" (2 Sam. xxiv. 3). I only urge it as an evidence of the assertion I am to prove, that no man is so pretermitted³ by God, or his disposal of temporals, but that even he that seems the most abandoned has a share in his pro-

³ *Pretermitted*,—to pass by.

vidence, and consequently cannot justly murmur, since even this state, which is the highest instance of human indigence, is not without its receipts from God.

12. But the number in this form are but few compared to those in a higher; for between this and the highest affluence, how many intermedial degrees are there, in which men partake not only of the necessities but comforts of life—that have not only food and raiment, but their distinction of holyday and working-day fare and apparel! He that is but one step advanced from beggary has so much, he that has got to a second has more than is necessary; and so every degree rises in plenty till it comes to vanity and excess. And even there too there are gradual risings; some having so much fuel for luxury, that they are at as great a loss for invention as others can be for materials, and complain that there are no farther riots left for them to essay. How many are there who have so cloyed and glutted their senses, that they want some other inlets for pleasure; and, with the rich man in the gospel, are in distress where to bestow their abundance!

13. And sure such as these cannot deny that they have received good things, yet generally there are none less contented; which is a clear demonstration that our repinings proceed not from any defect of bounty in God, but from the malignant temper of our own hearts. And as it is an easier

thing to satisfy the cravings of an hungry than to cure the nauseous recoilings of a surfeited stomach, so certainly the discontents of the poor are much easier allayed than those of the rich. The indigence of the one has contracted his desires, and has taught him not to look farther than a little beyond bare necessities; so that a moderate alms satisfies, and a liberal transports him: but he who by a perpetual repletion has his desires stretched and extended, is capable of no such satisfaction. When his enjoyments forestall all particular pursuits, and he knows not upon what to fasten his next wish, yet even then he has some confused unformed appetites, and thinks himself miserable because he cannot tell what would make him more happy. And yet this is that envied state which men with so much greediness aspire to. Every man looks on it as the top of felicity, to have nothing more to wish in the world. And yet, alas, even that, when attained, would be their torment. Let men never think, then, that contentment is to be caught by long and foreign chases: he is likeliest to find it who sits at home, and duly contemplates those blessings which God has brought within his reach, of which every man has a fair proportion, if he will advert to it.

14. For besides these external accessions (of which the meanest have some, the middle sort a great deal, and the uppermost rather too much), man is a principality within himself, and has in

his composition so many excellent impresses of his Maker's power and goodness, that he need not ask leave of any exterior thing to be happy, if he know but aright how to value himself: the very meanest part of him, his body, is a piece of admirable workmanship, of a most incomprehensible contrivance; as the Psalmist says, "he is fearfully and wonderfully made" (Ps. cxxxix. 13); and it is astonishing to think of what a symmetry of parts this beautiful fabric is made up. Nor are they only for show, but use: every member, every limb, is endowed with a particular faculty to make it serviceable to the whole; and so admirable is the contexture of veins and arteries, sinews and muscles, nerves and tendons, that none are superfluous, but some way or other contribute to vegetation, sense, or motion. Nay, the most noble and most useful parts are all of them double; not only as a reserve in case of misadventure of one part, but also as an instance of the bounty of the donor. And, indeed, it is observable of Galen in his writings, that after he had taken great care to exempt himself and all of his profession from taking notice of the Deity, by saying, that to discourse concerning the gods was the task of speculative philosophers; yet coming to write of the use of the parts of the body, *de usu partium*, and considering the frame of human bodies, and therein discovering the wonderful contrivance of every part in reference to itself, and also to the whole — their strength, agility, and

various movement, infinitely surpassing the powers of all mechanic engines,—he seems to have had the fate we read of Saul in holy Scripture, and against his genius and purpose to become a prophet, breaking frequently out into hymns and sacred raptures; saying, these mysteries are more divine than the Samothracian or Eleusinian, and confessing they both strictly require, and infinitely excel, the low returns of human praise. But beyond the fabric of parts as organic, what an extract of wonder are our senses!—those “five operations of the Lord,” as the son of Sirach rightly, and by way of eminence, styles them (*Ecclus. xvii. 5*). By these we draw all outward objects to ourselves. What were the beauties of the universe to us, if we had not sight to behold them; or the most melodious sounds, if we had not hearing? and so of the rest. And yet these are not only generally given, but also preserved to the greater part of men; and perhaps would be to more, did not our base undervaluing of common mercies force God sometimes to instruct us in their worth, by making us feel what it is to want them.

15. Multitudes of refreshments also God has provided for our bodies; particularly that of sleep, of which he has been so considerate, as in his distributions of time to make a solemn allotment for it; yet who, almost, when he lies down considers the mercy, or when he rises refreshed rises thankful also? But if our rest at any time be interrupted by the cares

of our mind, or pains of our bodies, then, and not till then, we consider that it is "God who gives his beloved sleep" (Ps. cxxvii. 2), and think it a blessing worth our esteem. Thus it is with health, strength, and every thing else; we despise it whilst we have it, and impatiently desire it whilst we have it not; but in the interim, sure we cannot complain that God's hand is shortened towards us, when in the ordinary course of his Providence we commonly enjoy these mercies many years, which we find so much miss of, if they be withdrawn but for a few hours. And, indeed, there is not a greater instance of human pravity than our senseless contempt of blessings, merely because they are customary; which in true reason is an argument why we should prize them the more. When we deal with men, we discern it well enough: he that gives me once a hundred pounds, I account not so much my benefactor, as if he made it my annual revenue; yet God must lose his thanks by multiplying his favours, and his benefits grow more invisible by their being always before us.

16. But the body, with its enjoyments, is but the lowest instance of God's bounty; it is but a decent case for that inestimable jewel he has put in it: the soul, like the ark,⁴ is the thing for which this whole tabernacle was framed; and that is a spark of divinity, in which alone it is that God accomplished his design of "making man in his own

⁴ See Heb. ix. 3, 4.

image" (Gen. i. 26). It would be too long to attempt an exact survey of its particular excellencies. The mere intellectual powers, wherewith it is endowed, have exercised the curiosity and raised the admiration of the great contemplators of nature in all ages; yet, after all, of so subtle composure is the soul, that it is inscrutable even to itself: and though the simplest man knows he has the faculties of imagination, apprehension, memory, reflection, yet the most learned cannot assign where they are seated, or by what means they operate. It is enough to us that we have them, and many excellent uses for them; one whereof (and a most necessary one) is a thankful reflection on the goodness of God who gave them. He might have made us in the very lowest form of creatures, insensible stocks or stones; or, if he had advanced us a step higher, he might have fixed us among mere animals, made us perhaps of the noxious, at best of the tamer, sort of beasts: but he has placed us in the highest rank of visible creatures, and not only given "dominion over the works of his hands" (Ps. viii. 6), but has given us the use of reason, wherewith to manage that sovereignty, without which we had only been the more masterful sort of brutes.

17. Yet still the soul is to be considered in a higher notion, that of its immortality and capacity of endless bliss; and here, indeed, it owns its extraction, and is an image of the first Being, whose felicity is coexistent with himself. This, as it is the

most transcendent accomplishment of our nature, so it is most universal. Whatever disparity there may be between man and man in other respects, yet in this all are equal. The poor beggar at the gate has a soul as capacious of eternal happiness, as he whose crumbs he begs for, nay, sometimes better prepared for it, as that parable shews, Luke xvi. 21. And though the dignities of earth are the prize of the rich and noble, the subtle and designing, yet heaven is as easily mounted from the dunghill as the throne; and an honest simplicity will sooner bring us thither than all the Machiavellian policy. Nay, God has not only designed us to so glorious an end, but has done all on his part to secure us of it—sent his Son to lead us the way, his Spirit to quicken us in it. We need not dispute how universal this is; it is sure it concerns all to whom I am now speaking,—those that are within the pale of the Church: and if it should prove confined to them, the more peculiar is their obligation, that are thus singled out from the rest of the world, and the greater ought to be their thankfulness. The heathen philosopher made it matter of his solemn acknowledgment to Fortune, that he was born a Grecian, and not a barbarian; and sure the advantages of our Christianity are of a much higher strain, and ought to be infinitely more celebrated. The apostle we find often applauding this glorious privilege, as that which makes us “fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God” (Eph.

ii. 19); nay, which elevates us to a higher state, "the adoption of sons" (Gal. iv. 5); nor only sons, but "heirs also of God, and joint heirs with Christ" (Rom. viii. 17). And what ambition is there so greedy which this will not satisfy? Yet this is our common state, the birthright of our regeneration, if we do not degrade ourselves, and, with Esau, basely sell our title.

18. And now methinks every man may interrogate himself in the same form wherein Jonadab did Amnon: "Why art thou, being the king's son, thus lean from day to day?" (2 Sam. xiii. 4.) Why should a person who is adopted by the King of kings thus languish and pine? What is there below the sun worthy his notice, much less his desires, that hath a kingdom above it? Certainly did we but know how to estimate ourselves upon this account, it were impossible for us with such sordid condescensions to court every petty worldly interest, and so impatiently vex ourselves when we cannot attain it. Alas! how unworthily do we bear the name of Christians, when that which carried the forefathers of our faith through the most fiery trials cannot support us under the disappointment of any extravagant desire! They had such "respect to the recompense of the reward" (Heb. xi. 26), as made them cheerfully expose their fame to ignominy, their goods to rapine, their bodies to the most exquisite tortures, and their lives to death. Yet the same hopes cannot work us to any tolerable

degree of patience, when we suffer but the smallest diminution in any of these. What shall we say? Is heaven grown less valuable, or earth more, than it was then? No, surely, but we are more infatuated in our estimates; we have so long abetted the rivalry of the handmaid, that the mistress, like Sarah, appears despicable. Like Jonah, we sit down sullen upon the withering of a gourd, never considering that God has provided us a better shelter, "a building of God, eternal in the heavens" (2 Cor. v. 1). Indeed, there can be no temporal destitution so great which such an expectation cannot make supportable. Were we in Job's condition, sitting upon a dunghill, and scraping ourselves with a potsherd, yet as long as we can say with him "our Redeemer liveth" (Job xix. 25), we have all reason to say with him also, "blessed be the name of the Lord" (ch. i. 21). What a madness is it then for us to expose ourselves to be pierced and wounded by every temporal adversity, who have so impenetrable an armour! nay, what an ungrateful contumely is it to that goodness of God, to shew that we cannot make him a counterpoise to the most trivial secular satisfaction! on which account sure he may again take up that exprobrating⁵ complaint we find in the prophet, "A goodly price that I was valued at by them" (Zech. xi. 13).

19. But how mean soever he is in our eyes,

⁵ To *exprobrate*,—to charge upon with reproach.

though Christ seem the same to us in his glory which he did in his abjection, to have no beauty that we should desire him ; yet he puts another rate upon himself, and tells us that he " that loves father of mother, son or daughter, more than me, is not worthy of me" (Matt. x. 37). Now our love and our joy are passions coincident ; and therefore whatever we joy more in than we do in him, we may be presumed to love better ; and if he cannot endure the competition of those more ingenuous objects of our love he here mentions, how will he suffer that of our vanities, our childish, wanton appetites ? And yet those are the things after which we so impatiently rave. For I believe I may truly affirm, that if there were a scrutiny made into all the discontents of mankind, for one that were fastened upon any great considerable calamity, there are many that are founded only in the irregularity of our own desires.

20. By what has been said, we may justly conclude in the prophet's phrase, " God hath not been to us a wilderness, a land of darkness" (Jer. ii. 31), but has graciously dispensed to us in all our interests. Yet the instances here given are only common, such as relate to all, or at least the far greater part of mankind ; but what volumes might be made, should every man set down his own particular experiences of mercy ! In that case it would be no extravagant hyperbole we find John xxii. 25, " that even the world itself could not contain

the books which should be written." God knows our memories are very frail, and our observations slight in this point; yet abstracting from all the forgotten or neglected favours, what vast catalogues may every man make to himself, if he would but yet recollect what effects he has had of God's bounty in giving, of his providence in protecting, of his grace in restraining and exciting, of his patience in forbearing! And certainly all these productions of the Divine goodness were never designed to die in the birth. The Psalmist will tell us, "The Lord hath so done his marvellous works that they ought to be had in remembrance" (Ps. cxi. 3). Let every man then make it his daily care to recount to himself the wonders God hath done, as for the children of men in general, so for himself in particular. When the Israelites murmured under their bondage, Pharaoh imputes it to their idleness, and prescribes them more work as the readiest cure: a piece, indeed, of inhuman tyranny in him, but may with equity and success be practised by us upon ourselves. When we find our appetites mutinous, complaining of our present condition, let us set ourselves to work—impose it as a task upon ourselves to recollect the many instances of God's mercies. And surely, if we do it sincerely and with intention,⁶ we cannot have passed through half our stages before our sullen murmurs will be beat out

⁶ *Intention*,—eagerness of desire, closeness of attention, deep thought.

of countenance, and retire with shame when they are confronted with such a cloud of witnesses, such signal testimonies of God's goodness to us: for when we have mustered up all our little grievances, most critically examined all our wants, we shall find them very unproportionable to our comforts and to our receipts; in which comparative notion the next chapter is to consider them.





CHAPTER IV.

OF THE SURPLUSAGE OF OUR ENJOYMENTS ABOVE OUR SUFFERINGS.



O regulate our estimate of those things which we either enjoy or suffer, there are three precedent queries to be made: the first, of their number or plenty; the second, of their weight; the third, of their constancy and continuance; for according as they partake more of these properties, every good is more good, and every evil is more evil. It will therefore be our best method of trial, in the present case, to compare our blessings and our calamities in these three respects.

2. And first in that of plenty: the mercies of God are the source of all our good, are set out to us in holy Scripture in the most superlative strain. They are "multitude" (Ps. cvi. 7); "plenteous redemption" (Ps. cxxx. 7); "as high as the heaven" (Ps. ciii. 11). He "fills all things living with plenteousness" (Ps. cxlv. 16). His mercies, indeed, are

such as come not within the compass of number, but stretch themselves to infinity, and are best represented by such a calculation as God made to Abraham, when he shewed the numerousness of his posterity by the innumerableness of the stars (Gen. xv. 5). Were there but a single mercy apportioned to each minute of our lives, the sum would arise very high ; but how is our arithmetic confounded when every minute has more than we can distinctly number ! For, besides the original stock mentioned in the last chapter, and the accession of new bounty, the giving us somewhat which we had not before, what an accumulative mercy is it, the preserving what we have ! We are made up of so many pieces, have such varieties of interests, spiritual, temporal, public and private, for ourselves, for our friends and dependents, that it is not a confused general regard that will keep all in security one moment. We are like a vast building, which costs as much to maintain as to erect ; and indeed, considering the corruptibleness of our materials, our preservation is no less a work of Omnipotence than our first forming ; nay, perhaps it is rather a greater. Our original clay, though it had no aptness, yet it had no aversions to the receiving a human form, but was in the hand of the potter to make it what he pleased ; but we now have principles of decay within us, which vehemently tend to dissolution : we want the supplies of several things without us, the failing whereof returns us again to

our dust. Nay, we do not only need the aid, but we fear the hostility of outward things : that very air which sometimes refreshes us may at another starve and freeze us ; that which warms and comforts us has also a power of consuming us ; yea, that very meat which nourishes may choke and stifle us. In a word, there is no creature so despicable, so inconsiderable, which may not sometimes serve us, and which may not at any time (if God permit) ruin us. Now, whence is it that we so constantly, so frequently find the good, the benign efficacy of these things, and so seldom, so rarely the evil ? Whence, I say, is it, but from the active unwearied Providence, which draws forth the better properties of the creatures for our use, and restrains the worse for our security ; which, with a particular advertence, watches not only over every person, but over every several concern of that person ? And how astonishing a contemplation is this ! If the mere ebbing and flowing of the sea put the philosopher¹ into such an ecstasy, that he flung himself into it, because he could not comprehend the inscrutable cause of it ; in what perpetual raptures of admiration may we be, who have every minute within us and about us more and greater wonders, and those too in our favour, when we deserve rather the Divine Power should exert itself in our destruction !

3. But, alas, our danger from the visible crea-

¹ The story is related of Aristotle ; but it is not worthy of credit.—ED.

tures is little compared with that from the spirits of darkness: "We wrestle not only with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers, with spiritual wickedness," &c. (Eph. vi. 12.) So inveterate is the enmity between the serpent and the seed of the woman in general, that he watches all advantages against us, not only in our souls, but even our bodies, our goods, and in every part of our concerns. Thus we see he not only assaulted Job's soul by the wicked insinuations of his wife, but (with more effect) his body with boils and sores, his possessions by the Chaldeans and Sabeans, and the images of himself, his dearest children, by a wind from the wilderness (Job i.). And can we think his malice is now worn out? No, surely he still wishes as ill to mankind as ever; and we should soon see the woful effects of it, did not the same Power which let him loose for Job's trial restrain him for our safety: nay, had he but power to affright, though not to hurt us, even that would make our life very uncomfortable. We cannot hear the relation of spirits or apparitions but our blood chills upon it, and a horror runs through our veins; what should we then do, if he should make his night-walks through our chambers, and with his illusory terrors disturb our rest! Yet all this, and much more, he would do, if God did not chain up this "old dragon" (Rev. xx.); nay, if he were not at the expense of a guard about us, and those no less than angels. I shall not dispute whether every person hath not

his peculiar guardian ; for, though many have not improbably asserted it, we have ground enough of acquiescence in the general affirmation of the apostle, " that they are all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation" (Heb. i. 14). And now, if the reader please to sum up how many are his concerns, and how many are the dangers which await him in them all, he cannot sure render the account of those mercies which preserve the one and divert the other in any other phrase than that of the Psalmist, " They are more than I am able to express" (Ps. xl. 7).

4. We may now challenge the most miserable or the most querulous man living to produce causes of complaint proportionable to those of thanksgiving. He that has the greatest stock of calamities can never vie with the heaps of benefits ; the disproportion is greater than that of the armies of Ahab and Benhadad, whereof the one was like " two little flocks of kids, the other filled the country" (1 Kings xx. 27). God has told us that he " afflicts not willingly, nor grieves the children of men" (Lam. iii. 33) ; whereas, on the contrary, he " delighteth in mercy" (Mic. vii. 18). We may judge by ourselves which he is likeliest often to repeat, those acts which he doth with regret and reluctancy, or those which he does with pleasure and delight. But we need no inferences where we have the attestation of experience. Let every man, therefore, make this his judge in the case ; let him every night recollect how many

things within and about him he is concerned in ; and consider how many of those have been preserved entire to him, still accounting every thing so continued as a new donation. If he begin with his spiritual state, it is too possible he may sometimes find he has lost his innocence, committed some, perhaps many, sins ; but even in these he will find cause to justify God, if he do but recollect with what inward checks and admonitions, and outward restraints, God has endeavoured to bridle him. If he will break through those fences, that does not at all derogate from the mercy of God, which so guarded him ; but it rather illustrates his goodness, that, after so many quenchings of his Spirit, does yet continue its influence. So that even he that has the most deplorably violated his integrity, is yet to confess that God's purpose was to have preserved it entire ; and he might really so have kept it, had he complied with those aids which were afforded him. But in temporal concerns we are not so apt to undermine ourselves, and therefore shall more rarely find we have suffered detriment in them than in our spiritual ; but are there ordinarily like to meet with a better account. Let a man, therefore, consider what is lacking to him of all the secular good things he had in the morning, and tell me whether, for the most part, he may not give such an account as the Israelitish officers did of their men after the slaughter of the Midianites, " that he hath not lost one" (Num. xxxi. 49) ; or if sometimes

he do suffer a diminution, yet at the worst he will find that many more good things have been preserved to him than have been taken from him. A man may perhaps meet with some damage in his estate, yet it is manifold odds that that damage is but partial, and that he has still more left than is lost; or if it be more entire, yet if he have his health, his limbs, his senses, his friends, and all things beside his estate left him, so that for one thing he has lost he still retains a multitude, he may say of it as the disciples of the few loaves, "What is this among so many?" (John vi. 9.) Aristippus being bemoaned for the loss of a farm, replied, with some sharpness, upon his condoler, "You have but one field, and I have yet three left; why should I not rather grieve for you?" intimating that a man is not so much to estimate what he has lost as what he has left. A piece of wisdom, which if we would transcribe, we might quickly convince ourselves that even in our most adverse estate there are, as Elisha speaks, "more with us than against us" (2 Kings vi. 16); that our enjoyments are more than our sufferings; and God's acts of grace do far outnumber those of his severity.

5. And as they do outnumber, so also do they outweigh them. The mercies we receive from God are (as the last chapter has shewn) of the greatest importance, the most substantial solid goods; and the greatest of all—I mean those which concern our eternal state—are so firmly fixed on us, that

unless we will voluntarily quit our claim, it is not in the power of men or devils to defeat us. Light bodies are easily blown away by every gust of wind; but this "weight of glory," as the apostle calls it (2 Cor. iv. 17), continues firm and stable, is proof against all storms, like the "shadow of a great rock in a weary land" (Is. xxxii. 2). Those dark adumbrations we have of it might have served to refresh and deceive the tediousness of our pilgrimage; and therefore the most formidable calamities of this life are below all measures of comparison with this hope of our calling, this "riches of the glory of our inheritance" (Eph. iii. 16). The heaviest and most pressing of our afflictions are to that "but like the small dust of the balance" (Is. xl. 15); so that if we should here stop our inquisition, we have a sufficient resolution of the present question, and must conclude, that God has given us an abundant counterpoise of all we either do or can suffer here.

6. If, therefore, there be any so forlorn as to temporals, that he can fetch thence no evidence of God's fatherly care of him, yet this one consideration may solve his doubts, and convince him that he is not abdicated by him. We read of no "gifts" Abraham gave Isaac, yet to the sons of the concubines it is said he did (Gen. xxv. 6). It had been a very fallacious inference if Isaac should have concluded himself neglected, because his far greater portion was but in reversion. And it will be the same in any of us, if we argue an unkindness from

any temporal wants, who have the entail of an eternal inheritance. But surely "God does not leave himself without witness" (Acts xiv. 17) even in secular things: there is no man breathing but has some blessings of his left hand as well as his right, as I have already mentioned; and unless it be some few prodigies of calamity, in whose punishment or patience God designs signally to glorify himself, there are none who enjoy not greater comforts of life than those they want—I mean such as are really greater, though perhaps to their prejudiced fancies they do not appear so. Thus in point of health, if a man be disaffected in one part, yet all the rest of his body may be, and often is, well; or if he have a complication, and have more than one disease. yet there is no man that has all, or half so many as are incident to human bodies; so that he is comparatively more healthy than sick. So, again, it is not very common for a man to lose a limb or sense; the generality of men keep them to their last; and they who do, have in that an overbalance to most outward adversities; and even they who are so unhappy to lose one, yet commonly keep the rest, at least the major part; or if at any time any man is left a mere breathing trunk, yet it is by such stupifying diseases as deaden the senses, or such mortal ones as soon take them away, and so the remedy overtakes the malady. Besides, it pleases God very often to make compensation for the want of one member or faculty by improving the use of

another. We have seen feet supply all the necessary uses of hands to those who have had none; and it is a thing of daily observation, that men that are blind have the greater internal light, have their intellects more vigorous and active by their abstractions from visible objects.

7. Thus also it is in the matter of wealth: he that is forced to get his bread by the sweat of his brow, it is true he cannot have those delicacies wherewith rich men abound; yet his labour helps him to a more poignant, a more savoury sauce than a whole college of epicures can compound. His hunger gives a higher gust to his dry crust than the surfeited stomach can find in the most costly, most elaborate mixtures: so verifying the observation of Solomon, "The full soul loatheth the honeycomb, but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet" (Prov. xxvii. 7). He cannot indeed "stretch himself upon his bed of ivory" (Amos vi. 4); yet his sleeps are sounder than those that can. The wise man tells us, and experience does so too, that "the sleep of a labouring man is sweet" (Eccles. v. 12). He is not clothed gorgeously, has not the splendour of glittering apparel; so neither has he the care of contriving it, the fears of being forestalled in a new invention, or any of those unmanly solitudes which attend that vanity. He has the proper genuine use of clothing, the preventing shame and cold, and is happily determined to that which the wiser men of the world have voluntarily

chosen. To conclude, he has one advantage beyond all these: his necessities rescue him from idleness, and all its consequent temptations; which is so great a benefit, that if rich men be not their own taskmasters, as his wants are his,—if they do not provide themselves of business,—that one want of theirs is infinitely more deplorable than all his; and he is not only happy, comparatively, with himself, in having better things than he wants, but with them also.

8. If we come now to reputation and fame, the account will be much the same. He that is eminent in the world for some great achievement, is set up as an object of every man's remark; when, as his excellencies on the one hand are visible, so his faults and blemishes are on the other; and as human frailty makes it too probable these latter will be really more, so human envy makes it sure that they shall be more precisely, more curiously observed, and more loudly blazoned. So that, upon the whole, a good quiet security, though it be not the road to glory, yet it is the likeliest fence against infamy. And, indeed, he that can keep up the repute of a sober integrity within his own private sphere, need not envy the triumphant sallies of others, which often meet with a fatal turn at the latter end of the day. But it will be said, that even that more moderate sort of reputation is not every man's portion; but that many lie under great ignominy and scandals. I shall here ask, whether those

be just or unjust. If they be just, they belong not to our present subject, which relates only to those inflictions which are the effects of God's immediate providence, not of our own crimes; for I never doubted but that by those we may divest ourselves of any, nay, of all the good things God has designed us. But if the obloquy be unjust, it is probable that it is taken up only by ill men, and that the good pass a more equitable sentence; and then surely the attestation of a few such is able to outweigh a multitude of the others. And in this case, a man may not only find patience, but pleasure in reproaches. Socrates looked with trouble and jealousy on himself when ill men commended him, saying, "What ill have I done?" And sure a Christian has a farther reason to be pleased with their revilings, they being his security against the "woe" pronounced to those "whom all men speak well of" (Luke vi. 26). But sometimes it happens that even good men are seduced; and either by the artifices of the wicked, or their own too hasty credulity, give credit to unjust reports. And this, I confess, is a sharp trial to the injured person; yet even this cannot often be universal. There can scarce be any innocence so forlorn but that there may be opportunities of clearing it to some or other, and by them propagating it to more. And if the cloud ever come to be dispersed, their fame will appear with the brighter lustre. But if none of this happen, they have yet a certain and more

blessed retreat,—even an appeal to the unerring Judge, who never beholds us with more approbation than when we are under the unjust condemnation of men. Indeed, we have then a double tie upon him; not only his justice, but his pity is concerned in our cause. God particularly owns himself as the refuge of the oppressed, and there is scarce a sharper and more sensible oppression than this of calumny; yet even this proves advantage, whilst it procures God's immediate patronage, makes us the objects of his more peculiar care and compassion, who can "make our righteousness as clear as the light" (Ps. xxxvii. 6), if he see it fit: but if in his wisdom he choose not that for us, it is comfort enough for us that we have approved it to him. It was Elkanah's question to Hannah in her disconsolation, "Am not I better to thee than ten sons?" (1 Sam. i. 8.) And sure we may say the like of God's approbation, that it is better to us, I say not than ten, but ten thousand eulogies of men. The very echo of it in the testimony of a good conscience is an unspeakable comfort; and this voice sounds more audibly, more sweetly, among the loudest, the harshest accusations of men. So that we see even this assault too is not without its guard; and these "waters of Marah" (Ex. xv. 23) may be rendered not only wholesome, but pleasant.

9. I have now instanced, in the three most general concerns of human life, the body, goods, and

fame; to which heads may be reduced most of the afflictions incident to our outward state, as far as immediately concerns ourselves. But there is no man stands so single in the world, but he has some relations or friends in which he thinks himself interested. And many times those oblique strokes which wound us through them are as painful as the most direct. Yet here also God is ordinarily pleased to provide some allays, if we would but take notice of them. He who has had one friend die, has ordinarily divers others surviving; or if he have not that, usually God raises him up others. It is true we cannot have a succession of fathers and mothers, yet we often have of other friends that are no less helpful to us; and indeed there are scarce in any thing more remarkable evidences of Providence than in this particular. "He that is able out of stones to raise up children to Abraham" (Matt. iii. 9), does many times, by as unexpected a production, supply friends to the desolate. But we do sometimes lose our friends while they are living—they withdraw their kindness, which is the soul of friendship; and if this happen by our own demerit, we can accuse neither God nor them for it; nor can we rationally expect that God should provide supplies, when we wilfully despoil ourselves. But when they are unkind without provocation, then is the season for His interposition, who uses to take up those whom "father and mother forsake" (Ps. xxvii. 10). And we frequently see signal proofs

of his care, in exciting the compassions of other friends and relatives, or, perhaps, of mere strangers; nay, sometimes God makes the inhumanity of a man's relations the occasion of his advantage. Thus the barbarous malice of Joseph's brethren was the first step to his dominion over Egypt. And it is a common observation in families, that the most discountenanced child oft makes better proof than the darling.

10. We are yet liable to a third affliction, by the calamity of our friends, which, by the sympathy of kindness, presses us no less (perhaps more) sensibly than our own; but, then, it is to be considered that theirs are capable of the same allaying circumstances that ours are, and God has the same arts of alleviating their burdens: so that we have the same arguments for acquiescence in their sufferings that we have in our own, and shall do a more friendly office in impressing those upon them than in the most passionate adopting their sorrows.

11. The last and greatest discomfort from friends is that of their sin; and if ever we may be allowed that disconsolate strain of the prophet, "Turn away from me, I will weep bitterly; labour not to comfort me" (Is. xxii. 4),—this seems to be the time; yet even this "valley of Achor² is not without a door of hope" (Hos. ii. 15). A vicious person may be

² The valley of *trouble*, out of which the Israelites found "a door of hope," when their troubles were followed by signal victories. See Joshua vii. 26, and the next chapter.

recalled; multitudes have been: so that as long as God continues life, we ought no more to deposit our hope, than to quit our endeavour. Besides, there are few that make this complaint that have not something to balance, or, at least, to lighten it. I shall instance in that relation which is the nearest and most tender,—that of a parent. He that has one bad child may have divers good. If he have but one virtuous, it is a very great mercy; and it is another, that he may be the better taught to value it by the opposition of the contrary. But if any be so unhappy as to have many children, and “all to consume his eyes and grieve his heart” (1 Sam. ii. 33), it may be a seasonable reflection for him to examine how far he has contributed to it, either by Eli’s fond indulgence, or by a remiss and careless education, or, which is worst of all, by his own impious example. If any or all of these be found the cause, he is not so much to seek for allays to his grief as for pardon of his sin. And when he has penitently retracted his own faults, he may then have better ground of hope that God may reform those of his children. In the meantime, he may look on his own affliction in them as God’s discipline on him, and gather at least this comfort from it, that his heavenly Father has more care of him than he had of his, and does not leave him uncorrected.

12. Thus we see, in all the concerns which are the most common and important of human life, and

wherein the justest of our complaints are usually founded, there is such a temperature and mixture, that the good does more than equal the ill, and that not only in the grosser bulk, when our whole state is weighed together, but in every single branch of it; God having herein dealt with this little world man, as he has done with the greater, wherein he is observed to have furnished every country with specific remedies for their peculiar diseases. I have only given these short hints by way of essay and pattern for the reader's contemplation, which, when he shall have extended to all those more minute particulars wherein he is especially concerned, more curiously compared his sufferings with his allays and comforts,—I cannot doubt but he will own himself an instance of the truth of the present thesis, and confess that he has much more cause of thankfulness than complaint.

13. This I say, supposing his afflictions to be of those more solid and considerable sorts I have before mentioned. But how many are there who have few or none of such, who seem to be seated in the land of Goshen—in a place exempt from all the plagues that infest their neighbours? And those, one would think, should give a ready suffrage to this conclusion, as having no temptation to op-pugn it. Yet I doubt it is far otherwise, and that such men are, of all, the most unsatisfied. For though they have no crosses of God's imposing, they usually create a multitude to themselves. And

here we may say with David, "It is better to fall into the hand of God than into the hand of man" (2 Sam. xxiv. 14): it is easier to bear the afflictions God sends than those we make to ourselves. His are limited both for quantity and quality, but our own are as boundless as those extravagant desires from which they spring.

14. And this is the true cause why contentment is so much a stranger to those who have all the outward causes of it,—they have no definite measure of their desires. It is not the supply of all their real wants will serve their turn; their appetites are precarious, and depend upon contingencies. They hunger not because they are empty, but because others are full. Many a man would have liked his own portion well enough, had he not seen another have something he liked better. Nay, even the most inconsiderable things acquire a value by being another's, when we despise much greater of our own. Ahab might well have satisfied himself with the kingdom of Israel, had not Naboth's poor plot lain in his eye; but so raving were his desires after it, that he disrelishes all the pomps of a crown, yea the ordinary refreshment of nature—"can eat no bread," till he have that to furnish him with salads (1 Kings xxi. 2). And how many are there now-a-days whose clothes sit uneasy, if they see another have had but the luck to be a little more ingeniously vain; whose meat is unsavoury, if they have seen but a greater rarity, a newer cookery.

at another's table; in a word, who make other people's excesses the standard of their own felicities!

15. Nor are our appetites only excited thus by our outward objects, but precipitated and hurried on by our inward lusts. The proud man so longs for homage and adoration, that nothing can please him, if that be wanting. Haman can find no gust in all the sensualities of the Persian court, because a poor despicable Jew denies his obeisance (Esth. v. 13). The lustful so impatiently pursues his impure designs, that any difficulty he meets in them makes him pine and languish like Amnon, who could no way recover his own health but by violating his sister's honour (2 Sam. xiii. 14). The revengeful labours under an hydropic³ thirst till he have the blood of his enemy; all the liquor of Absalom's sheep-shearing could not quench his, without the slaughter of his brother (2 Sam. xiii. 29). And thus every one of our passions keeps us upon the rack till they have obtained their designs; nay, when they have, the very emptiness of those acquisitions is a new torment, and puts us upon fresh pursuits. Thus, between the impetuosity of our desires and the emptiness of our enjoyments, we still "disquiet ourselves in vain" (Ps. xxxix. 7). And whilst we have such cruel taskmasters, it is not strange to find us groaning under our burdens. If we will indulge all our vicious or foolish appetites, think our lives bound up with them, and so-

³ *Hydropic*,—dropsical.

licit the satisfaction of them with as impatient a vehemence as Rachel did for children, "give me them, or I die" (Gen. xxx. 1),—no wonder that we are always complaining of disappointments, since in these the very success is a defeat, and is but the exchanging the pain of a craving ravenous stomach for that of a cloyed and nauseated. Indeed, men of this temper condemn themselves to a perpetual restlessness; they are like fantastic mutineers, who, when their superiors send them blanks to write their own conditions, know not what will please them; and even Omnipotence itself cannot satisfy these till it have new moulded them and reduced their desires to a certainty.

16. But in the meantime how unjustly do they accuse God of illiberality, because every thing answers not their humour! He has made them reasonable creatures, and has provided them satisfactions proportionable to their nature; but if they will have wild irrational expectations, neither his wisdom nor his goodness is concerned to satisfy those. His supplies are real and solid, and therefore have no correspondence to imaginary wants. If we will create such to ourselves, why do we not create an imaginary satisfaction to them? It were the merrier frenzy of the two to be like the mad Athenian, that thought all the ships that came into the harbour his own; and it were better, Ixion like, to have our arms filled with a cloud, than to have them perpetually beating our own breasts, and be

still tormenting ourselves with unsatisfiable desires. Yet this is the state to which men voluntarily subject themselves, and then quarrel at God because they will not let themselves be happy. But sure their very complaints justify God, and argue that he has dealt very kindly with them, and afforded them all the necessary accommodations of life; for did they want them, they would not be so sensible of the want of the other. He that is at perfect ease may feel with some vexation the biting of a flea or gnat, which would not be at all observable if he were upon the rack. And should God change the scene, and make these nice people feel the destitution of necessities, all these regrets about superfluities would be overwhelmed. In the meantime, how deplorable a thing is it, that we are still the poorer for God's bounty,—that those to whom he has opened his hand widest should open their mouth so too in outcries and murmurs! For I think I may say, that generally those that are the farthest removed from want are so from content too; they take no notice of all the real substantial blessings they enjoy; leave these (like the ninety-nine sheep in the wilderness) forgotten and neglected, to go in quest after some fugitive satisfaction, which, like a shadow, flies still faster in proportion to their pursuit.

17. And now, would God they could be recalled from this unprofitable chase, and instead of the horseleech's note, "Give, give" (Prov. xxx. 15), take up that of the Psalmist, "What shall I render

to the Lord for all the benefits he hath done unto me?" (Ps. cxvi. 12.) Let them count how many valuable, or rather inestimable, things they have received from his mercy, and then confront them with those corrections they have found from his justice; and if they do this impartially, I doubt not they will find wherewithal to check their highest mutinies, and will join with me in confessing that their good things abundantly outweigh their ill.

18. If now we carry on the comparison to the last circumstance, and consider the constancy, we shall find as wide a difference. Let us take the Psalmist's testimony, and there will appear a very distant date of his mercies and punishments: "His mercies endure for ever" (Ps. cxxxvi.); whereas his wrath "endures but the twinkling of an eye" (Ps. xxx. 5). And accordingly God owns his acts of severity as his "strange work" (Is. xxviii. 21), that which he resorts to only upon special emergencies; but his mercies "are renewed every morning" (Lam. iii. 23). And doubtless we may all upon trial affirm the same. There are many of the most necessary comforts of life which do not only sometimes visit us as guests, but dwell with us as inmates and domestics. How many are there who have lived in a perpetual affluence from their cradles to their graves—have never known what it is to want! And though the goods of fortune are, perhaps, less constant to some, yet the refreshments of nature are usually so to us all. We eat and drink,

we sleep, we recreate, we converse in a continued circle, and go our round almost as constantly as the sun does his. Or if God does sometimes a little interrupt us in it—put some short restraint upon our refreshments,—yet that, comparatively to the time we enjoy them, is but proportionable to the stop he has sometimes made of the sun (Jos. x. 13; 2 Kings xx. 8), or of the sea (Ex. xiv. 21), which, as they were no subversions of the course of nature, so neither are those short pauses he sometimes makes, a repeal of those fixed and customary benefits his providence usually allots us. But who is there can say that any one of his afflictions has been of equal continuance, or has pressed him with so few intermissions? Perhaps he may have missed some few nights' sleep; but what is that to a twelve month's, or perhaps a whole life's enjoying it? It is possible his stomach and his meat have not always been ready together; but how much oftener have they met to his delight? and generally those things that are most useful are but rarely interrupted. Nay, to a great many even the delicacies of life are no less constant, and their luxuries are as daily as their bread; whereas, unless their vices or their fancies create uneasinesses to them, those that come immediately from God's hand make long intermissions and short stays. Yet for all this, they that should measure by the incessantness of men's complaints would judge that the scene was quite reversed, and that our good things are, as

Job speaks, "swifter than a weaver's shuttle" (Job vii. 6); whilst our ills, like Gehazi's leprosy, "cleave inseparably to us" (2 Kings v. 27).

19. The truth is, we will not let ourselves enjoy those intervals God allows us; but when a calamity does retire, we will still keep it in fiction and imagination, revolve it in our minds, and because it is possible it may return, look upon it as not gone. Like aguish patients, we count ourselves sick on our well-day, because we expect a fit the next. A strange stupid folly thus to court vexation, and be miserable in chimera. Does any man, or indeed any beast, desire to keep a distasteful relish still in his mouth, to chew the cud upon gall and wormwood? Yet certainly there are a multitude of people whose lives are embittered to them merely by these fantastic imaginary sufferings. Nor do we only fright ourselves with images and ideas of past calamities, but we dress up new bugbears and mormoes,¹ are poetic and aërial in our inventions, and lay romantic scenes of distresses. This is a thing very incident to jealous natures, who are always raising alarms to themselves. A suspicious man looks on every body with dread. One man he fears has designs upon his fortune, another on his reputation, perhaps a third upon his life; whilst, in the meantime, the only ill design against him is managed by himself, his own causeless fears and jealousies, which put him in a state of hostility with all the world,

¹ *Mormo*,—bugbear, false terror.

and do often betray him to the very things he groundlessly suspected; for it is not seldom seen that men have incurred real mischiefs by a fond solicitude of avoiding imaginary ones. I do not question but this is a state calamitous enough, and shall acknowledge it very likely that such persons shall have little or no truce from their troubles, who have such an unexhausted spring within themselves; yet we may say to them as the prophet did to the house of Jacob, "Is the spirit of the Lord straitened? are these his doings?" (Mic. ii. 7.) Such men must not cry out that God's hand lies heavy upon them, but their own; and so can be no impeachment to the truth of our observations, that God's blessings are of a longer duration, keep a more fixed steady course than his punishments. The result of all is, that the generality of mankind have good things (even as to temporals), which do in the three respects forementioned exceed the ill. I mean the true and real ills which God sends, though not those fanciful ones they raise to themselves.

20. And now why should it not appear a reasonable proposition, that men should entertain themselves with the pleasanter parts of God's dispensations to them, and not always pore upon the harsher; especially since the former are so much a fairer object, and perpetually in their eye, why should we look on the more saddening spectacles of human frailty or misfortune through all the magnifying optics our fancies can supply, and perversely turn

away our eyes from the cheerfuler? Yet this, God knows, is too much the case with most of us. How nicely and critically do we observe every little adverse accident of our lives; what tragical stories of them do our memories present us with, when, alas, a whole current of prosperity glides by without our notice! Like little children, our fingers are never off the sore place, till we have picked every little scratch into an ulcer. Nay, like the lewder sort of beggars, we make artificial sores, to give us a pretence of complaint. And can we then expect God should concern himself in the cure? Indeed, in the course of his ordinary providence, there is no cure for such people, unless it be by revulsion, the making them feel the smart of some very great and pressing affliction. They therefore put themselves under an unhappy dilemma, either to continue their own tormentors, or to endure the severest course of God's discipline. It is true the last is the more eligible; but I am sure the best way is to prevent both, by a just and grateful sense of God's mercies, which will be yet farther illustrated if we compare them with our own demerits.





CHAPTER V.

OF OUR DEMERIT TOWARDS GOD.



Tis the common fault of our nature, that we are very apt to be partial to ourselves, and to square our expectations more by what we wish than by what we deserve. Something of this is visible in our dealings with men. We oft "look to reap where we have not sown" (Matt. xxv. 26), expect benefits where we do none: yet in civil transactions there are still remaining such footsteps of natural justice, that we are not universally so unreasonable; all traffic and commerce subsisting upon the principle of equal retribution, giving one good thing for another equivalent; so that no man expects to buy corn with chaff, or gold with dross. But in our dealings with God we put off even this common equity, are vast in our expectations, but penurious and base in our returns; and as if God were our steward,

not our Lord, we require of him, with a confidence proper only to those who ask their own: whilst in the interim, what we offer to him is with such a disdainful slightness, as if we meant it rather an alms than an homage.

2. God is indeed so munificent, that he “prevents us with his blessings” (Ps. xxi. 3), gives us many things before we ask: had he not done so, we could not have been so much as in a capacity of asking. But though the first and fundamental mercies are absolute and free, yet the subsequent are conditional; and accordingly we find in Scripture, that God makes no promise either concerning this life or a better, but on condition of obedience. The Jews, who had much larger proposals of temporal happiness than Christians have, yet never had them upon other terms. God expressly articulated for the performance of his commands, and made all their enjoyments forfeitable upon the failure,—as we may see at large in the book of Deuteronomy. And under the Gospel, St. Paul appropriates the “promises as well of this life as of that to come” unto godliness (1 Tim. iv. 8). It will therefore be a material inquiry for every man, whether he have kept his title entire, and have not, by breach of the condition, forfeited his claim even to the most common ordinary blessings: for if he have, common reason will tell him he can challenge none; and that the utmost he can hope for must be only upon a new score of unmerited favour.

3. And here certainly "every mouth must be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God" (Rom. iii. 19). For, alas, who is there that can say his obedience has been in any degree proportionable to his obligation? It is manifest we have all received abundantly from God's hand; but what has he had from ours? I may challenge the best man to cast up the account of his best day, and tell me whether his receipts have not infinitely exceeded his disbursements; whether, for any one good thing he has done, he has not received many. Nor is the disparity only in number, but much more in value. God's works are perfect, all he does for us, like the first six days' productions, "are all very good" (Gen. i.); but, alas, our very "righteousness is as filthy rags" (Is. lxiv. 6). We offer him "the blind and the lame" (Mal. i. 8); a few yawning, drowsy prayers perhaps, wherein he has the least share; the fuller current of our thoughts running towards our secular or sinful concerns. We drop, it may be, a scanty alms, wherein it is odds our vain-glory scrambles for a share with him, if it do not wholly engross it. We sit an hour at a sermon, but it is rather to hear the wit or eloquence of the preacher than the word of God. Like the duller sort of animals, we like well to have our itching ears scratched; but grow sturdy and restive when we should do what we are there taught. In a word, all our services at the best are miserably maimed and imperfect, and too often corrupt and unsound.

So that God may well upbraid us as he did Israel, "Offer it now to thy governor, will he be pleased with it?" (Mal. i. 8.) These very iniquities of our holy things are enough to defeat all our pretences to any good from God's hand. Yet, God knows, this is much the best side of us; it is not every one that can make so fair an appearance as this amounts to. With many there is no place to complain of the blemishes of their sacrifices, for they offer none: of whom we may say, in the words of the Psalmist, "God is not in all their thoughts" (Ps. x. 4). I fear there want not those who drive away the day, the week, nay, the year, without remembering in whose "hand their time is" (Ps. xxxi. 17), or paying him any solemn tribute of it; who enjoy the services of all inferior creatures without considering that theirs are more due to the supreme Lord; in a word, who live as if they were absolutely independent, had their existence purely from themselves, and had no Creator, to whom they owed their being, or any consequent duty. And sure men who thus discard themselves from God's family have very little reason to expect the provisions of it: yet even such as these have the impudence to complain, if any thing be wanting to their needs (shall I say?), or to their lusts; can ravingly profane God's name in their impatiences, which they know not how to use in their prayers,—as if the Deity were considerable in no other notion than that of their caterer or steward.

4. If, now, we seriously reflect, what can be more admirable than that infinite patience of God, who, notwithstanding the miserable infirmities of the pious, and the lewd contempt of the impious, still goes on resolutely in his bounty, and continues to all mankind some, and to some all his temporal blessings ! He has no obligation of justice to do so, for it is no part of his compact ; he has none of gratitude, for he is perpetually affronted and disobliged. Surely we may well say with David, " Is this after the manner of men, O Lord ? " (2 Sam. vii. 19.) Can the highest human indulgence bear any proportion with this Divine clemency ? No, certainly ; no finite patience but would be exhausted with the thousandth part of our provocations.

5. But is not our dealing, too, as little after the manner of men — I mean of reasonable creatures ? For us, who have forfeited our right to all, and yet by mere favour are still kept in the possession of many great blessings,—for us to grow mutinous, because there is perhaps something more trifling which is denied us, is such a stupid ingratitude as one would think impossible to human nature. Should a tenant with us have at once forfeited his lease and maliciously affronted his landlord, he would sure think himself very gently dealt with, if he were suffered to enjoy but a part of his first estate ; but we should think him not only insolent, but mad, who, when the whole were left him, should quarrel and clamour if he might not have his cottage

adorned with marble floors and gilded roofs. Yet at this wild rate we behave ourselves to our great Landlord; grow pettish and angry, if we have not every thing we can fancy, though we enjoy many more useful, merely by his indulgence. And can there be any thing imagined more unreasonable? Let us therefore, if not for piety, yet at least to justify our claim to rationality, be more ingenuous; let us not consult only with our fond appetites, and be thus perpetually soliciting their satisfaction; but rather reflect on what tenure we hold what we already have, even that of superabundant mercy; and fear lest, like insolent beggars, by the impudence of our demands, we divert even that charity which was designed us. In short, let every man when he computes what he wants of his desires reckon as exactly how much he is short of his duty; and when he has duly pondered both, he will think it a very gentle composition to have the one unsupplied, so he may have the other remitted; and will see cause contentedly to sit down and say with honest Mephibosheth, "What right have I to cry any more unto the king?" (2 Sam. xix. 28.) But if it be thus with us upon the mere score of our imperfections or omissions, what an obnoxious state do our innumerable actual sins put us in! If the spots of our sacrifices are provoking, what are our sacrileges and bold profanations? If those who neglect or forget God are listed among his enemies, what are those who avowedly defy him? Indeed, he that

soberly considers the world, and sees how daringly the divine Majesty is daily affronted, cannot but wonder that the perversions of our manners, those prodigies in morality, should not be answered with as great prodigies in calamity too; that we should ever have other ruin than that of Sodom, or the earth serve us for any other purpose than to be, as it was to Korah (Numb. xvi.), our living sepulchre.

6. Nor is this forbearance of God observable only towards the mass and collective body of mankind, but to every man in particular. Who is there that, if he ransack his conscience, shall not find guilts enough to justify God in the utmost severities towards him; so that how much soever his punishments are short of that, so much he evidently owes to the lenity and compassion of God? And who is there that suffers in this world the utmost that God can inflict? We have a great many suffering capacities; and if those were all filled up to the height, our condition would scarce differ from that of the damned in any thing but duration. But God is more merciful, and never inflicts at that rate on us here. Every man's experience can tell him that God discharges not his whole quiver at once upon him, but exempts him in many more particulars than he afflicts him; and yet the same experience will probably tell most of us that we are not so modest in our assaults upon God; we attack him in all his concerns (as far as our feeble malice can reach)—in his sovereignty, in

his honour, in his relatives, nay, sometimes in his very essence and being. And as they are universal in respect of him, so also in regard of ourselves; we engage all our powers in this war; do not only "yield," as the apostle speaks, "our members instruments of unrighteousness" (Rom. vi. 18), but we press them upon the service of sensual and vile lusts even beyond our native propensions. Nor are only the members of our body, but the faculties of our souls also thus employed. Our understandings are busied first in contriving sins, and then excuses and disguises for them. Our wills are yet more sturdy rebels; and when the understanding is beat out of all its outworks, yet sullenly keep their hold in spite of all conviction; and our affections madly rush on, "like the horse into the battle" (Jer. viii. 6), deterred by nothing of danger, so there be but sin enough in the attempt.

7. And now with what face can people that thus pursue an hostility expect that it should not be returned to them? Does any man denounce war, and yet expect from his adversary all the caresses, the obligations of friendship? Self-defence will prompt even the meekest nature to despoil his enemy at least of those things which he uses to his annoyance; and if God should give way even to that lowest degree of anger, where or what were we? for since we employ our whole selves against him, nothing but destruction can avert our injuries. But it is happy for us we have

to do with One who cannot fear us ; who knows the impotence of our wild attempts, and so allays his resentment of our insolence with his pity of our follies. Were it not for this, we should not be left in a possibility so oft to iterate our provocations ; every wicked imagination and black design would be at once defeated and punished by infatuation and frenzy ; every blasphemous atheistical speech would wither the tongue, like that " arm " of Jeroboam which he stretched against the prophet (2 Kings xiii. 4) ; and every impious act would, like the prohibited retrospect of Lot's wife, fix us perpetual monuments of Divine vengeance.

8. And, then, how much do we owe to the mercy and commiseration of our God, that " he suffers not his whole displeasure to arise " (Ps. lxxviii. 39) ; that he abates any thing of that just severity he might use toward us ! He that is condemned to the gallows would think it a mercy to escape with any inferior penalty : why have we, then, such mean thoughts of God's clemency when he descends to such low compositions with us, corrects us so lightly, as if it were only matter of ceremony and punctilio, the regard of his honour, rather than the execution of his wrath ? For, alas, let him among us that is the most innocent, and undeservedly afflicted, muster up his sins and sufferings, and he will see a vast inequality ; and (had he not other grounds of assurance) would be almost tempted to think those were not the provoking cause, they are

so unproportionably answered! He sins in innumerable instances, and is punished in few; he sins habitually and perpetually, and suffers rarely and seldom; nay, perhaps he has sometimes sinned with greediness, and yet God has punished with regret and reluctancy. "How shall I give thee up, O Ephraim?" (Hos. xi. 8.) And when all the disparities are considered, we must certainly join heartily in Ezra's confession, "Thou, O God, hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve" (Ezra ix. 13).

9. Nay, besides all our antecedent, we have after-guilts no less provoking; I mean our ungracious repinings at the light chastisements of our former sins; our outcries upon every little uneasiness, which may justly cause God to turn our whips into scorpions, and, according as he threatened Israel, "to punish us yet seven times more" (Lev. xxvi. 18). And yet even this does not immediately exasperate him. The Jews were an instance how long he could bear with a murmuring generation; but certainly we of this nation are a greater: yet "let us not be high-minded, but fear" (Rom. xi. 20); for we see at last the doom fell heavy, though it was protracted; a succession of miraculous judgments pursued those murmurers, so that not one of them entered Canaan. And it is very observable, that whereas to other sins God's denunciations are in Scripture conditional and reversible, this was absolute, and bound with an oath; "He sware in his wrath, that they should not

enter into his rest" (Ps. xcv. 11). And yet if we compare the hardships of the Israelites in the wilderness with most of our sufferings, we shall be forced to confess our mutinies have less temptation, and consequently less excuse; from whence it is very reasonable to infer, as the greatness of our danger if we persist, so the greatness of God's long-suffering towards us, who yet allows us space to reform: and sure new complaints sound very ill from us, who are liable to so severe an account for our old ones. I fear the most resigned persons of us will upon recollection find they have upon one occasion or other outvied the number of the Israelites' murmurs: therefore, unless we will emulate them in their plagues, let us fear to add one more, lest that make up the fatal sum, and render our destruction irrevocable.

10. Upon all these considerations, it appears how little reason any of us have to repine at our heaviest pressures. But there is yet a farther circumstance to be adverted to, and is too applicable to many of us; that is, that our sins are not only the constant meritorious cause of our sufferings, but they are also very often the instrumental cause also, and produce them not only by way of retaliation from God, but by a natural efficacy. Solomon tells us, he that "loves pleasure shall be a poor man" (Prov. xxi. 17); and that "a whorish woman will bring a man to a piece of bread" (vi. 26); that "he that sits long at the wine shall have red-

ness of eyes" (xxiii. 29, 30); that "the slothful soul shall suffer hunger" (xix. 15); and all these, not by immediate supernatural infliction from God, but as the proper genuine effects of those respective vices. Indeed, God in his original establishment of things has made so close a connexion between sin and punishment, that he is not often put to exert his power in any extraordinary way, but may trust us to be our own lictors:¹ our own "backslidings reprove us" (Jer. ii. 19); "and our iniquities are" of themselves enough to "become our ruin" (Ezek. xviii. 30).

11. It may, therefore, be a seasonable question for every man to put to himself, whether the troubles he labours under be not of this sort; whether the poverty he complains of be not the effect of his riot and profusion, his sloth and negligence; whether when he cries out that "his comeliness is turned into corruption" (Dan. x. 8), he may not answer himself, that they are his visits to the harlot's house, which have thus made "rottenness enter into his bones" (Hab. iii. 16); whether when he is beset with contentions, and has wounds without cause, "he have not tarried long at the wine;" when he has lost his friend, whether he have not by some "treacherous wound" (Ecclus. xxii. 22) forced him to depart; or when he lies under infamy, whether it be not only the echo of his own scandalous

¹ *Lictors* were Roman officers employed (like our beadles or constables) to apprehend and punish criminals.

crimes. If he find it thus with him, certainly his mouth is stopped, and he cannot, without the most disingenuous impudence, complain of any but himself. He could not be ignorant that such effects do naturally attend such causes; and therefore if he would take the one, he must take the other also. No man sure can be so mad as to think God should work miracles (disunite those things which nature hath conjoined), only that he may sin at ease, have all the bestial pleasures he can project, and none of the consequent smart. We read, indeed, God divided the sea; but it was to make "the way for the ransomed of the Lord to pass over" (Is. li. 10), those who were his own people, and went in at his command; but when they were secured, we find the waters immediately returned to their channel, and overwhelmed the Egyptians, who ventured without the same warrant. And sure the case is alike here: when any man can produce God's mandate for him to run into all excess of riot, to desecrate the temple of the Holy Ghost, "and make his body the member of an harlot" (1 Cor. vi. 15); in a word, when God bids him do any of those things which God and good men abhor, then, and not before, he may hope he may sever such acts from their native penal effects; for till then (how profuse soever some legendary stories represent him) he will certainly never so bestow his miracles.

12. But I fear, upon scrutiny, there will appear a yet farther circumstance upon which to arraign our

mutinies; for though it be unreasonable enough to charge God with the ill effect of our own lewdness, yet it is a higher step to murmur because we have not materials to be wicked enough. And this I fear is the case with too many of us, who, though they are not so despoiled by their sins, but that they can keep up their round of vicious pleasures, yet are discontented because they think some others have them more exquisite, think their vices are not genteel enough unless they be very expensive, and are covetous only that they may be more luxurious. These are such as St. James speaks of, who "ask amiss, that they may consume it upon their lusts" (James iv. 3); and sure to be mutinous on this account is one of the highest pieces of frenzy. Would any man in his wits tell another he will cut his throat, and then expect he should furnish him with a knife for it? And yet to this amount our murmurs against God for his not giving us those things wherewith we only design to wage war with him; for surely if the discontents of mankind were closely inspected, I doubt a great many would be found of this kind. It concerns the reader, therefore, to make the inquisition in his own breast, both in this and all the former particulars; and I doubt not, if he do it with any ingenuity and uprightness, he will be abundantly convinced that for his few mites of obedience he pays to God, he receives talents of mercies (even temporal) from him; and that on the other side, God as much underpays his sins as

he overpays his services : by which God does sufficiently attest how little he delights in our affliction, how gladly he takes any light occasion of caressing and cherishing, and overskips those of punishing us ; which sure ought to make us convert all our displeasures against our sins, which extort those acts of severity from him to which his nature is most averse. And here, indeed, our resentments cannot be too sharp ; but towards God our fittest address will be in the penitential form of the prophet Daniel, " O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face ; but to the Lord our God belong mercies and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against him " (Dan. ix. 8, 9). And as his justice is to be revered in his inflictions, so is his wisdom also in so disposing of events to particular persons as may best consist with the universal economy and management of the world ; the consideration whereof is the design of the next chapter.





CHAPTER VI.

OF GOD'S GENERAL PROVIDENCE.



WHEN God made the universe, he intended not only to glorify himself in one transient act of his power, and then leave this great and wonderful production of his, as the "ostrich her eggs" in the wilderness (Lam. iv. 3); but having drawn it out of its first chaos, he secured it from returning thither again by establishing as a due symmetry of parts, so also a regular order of motion; hence it is that the heavens have their constant revolutions, the earth its succession of determinate seasons, animals their alternate course of generation and corruption; and by this wise economy, the world, after so many thousand years, seems still in its spring and first beauty. But it had been in vain to have thus secured against the defection of the creatures, if man, for whose sake they were made, had been excluded from this care. His faculty of reason would have made him but the more fatal instrument of confusion, and taught him the more com-

pendious ways of disturbing the world. Job compares him to the "wild ass's colt" (Job xi. 12), which takes its range without adverting to any thing of the common good. God has, therefore, doubly hedged in this unruly creature, made a fence of laws about him (both natural and positive); and besides has taken him into the common circle of his providence; so that he, as well as the rest of the creation, has his particular station assigned him; and that not only in reference to other creatures, but himself; has put a difference between one man and another, ordained several ranks and classes of men, and endowed them with special and appropriate qualifications for those stations wherein he has set them.

2. This, as it is a work of infinite wisdom in God, so it is of unspeakable advantage to men. Without this regular disposeure, the world would have been in the same confusion which we read of in the host of the Midianites, "every man's sword against his fellow" (Judges vii. 22). Nothing but force could determine who should do or enjoy any thing; and even that decision also would have been repealable by a greater force; so that we have all reason to confess the utility of that order God has set among men; and even he that bears the lowest and most despicable place in it is certainly infinitely more happy by contributing to that general harmony than he could be in any state of discord.

3. Were this now well considered, methinks it

should silence all our complaints, and men should not be so vehemently concerned in what part of the structure it pleases the great Architect to put them; for every man is to look on himself only as a small parcel of those materials which God is to put into form. Every stone is not fit for the corner, nor every little rafter for the main beam; the wisdom of the Master-builder is alone to determine that. And sure there cannot be a more vile contempt of the Divine Wisdom than to dispute his choice. Had God wisdom enough to contrive this vast and beautiful fabric, and may he not be trusted with one of us poor worms? Did he by his "wisdom make the heavens, and by his understanding stretch out the clouds" (Prov. iii. 19), and shall he not know where to place a little lump of figured earth? This is certainly the most absurd distrust imaginable; and yet this is really the true meaning of our repining at the condition he has placed us in.

4. The truth is, we are so full of ourselves that we can see nothing beyond it; every man expects God should place him where he has a mind to be, though by it he discompose the whole scheme of his providence. But though we are so senselessly partial, yet God is not so: he that comprehends at once the whole concerns of mankind, applies himself to the accommodating those, not the humouring any particular person. "He has made the great and the small, and careth for all alike" (Wis. vi. 7).

He is the common Father of mankind, and disposes things for the public advantage of this great family ; and it is not all the impatient cravings of a froward child that shall make him recede from his designed method. We are apt enough, I am sure, to tax it not only as a weakness but injustice too in a prince when he indulges any thing to a private favourite to the public disadvantage ; yet so unequal are we, that we murmur at God for not doing that which we murmur at men for doing.

5. Besides, a man is to consider that other men have the same appetites with himself. If he dislike an inferior state, why should he not think others do so too ? and then, as the wise man speaks, " whose voice shall the Lord hear ? " (Ecclus. xxxiv. 24.) It is sure great insolence in me to expect that God should be more concerned to humour me than those multitudes of others who have the same desires. And the more impatient my longings are, the less in reason should be my hopes ; for mutiny is no such endearing quality as to render any man a darling to God. But if all men should have equal satisfactions, we should puzzle even Omnipotence itself. Every man would be above and superior, yet those are comparative terms ; and if no man were below, no man could be above. So in wealth, most men desire more, but every man does at least desire to keep what he has ; how then shall one part of the world be supplied without the diminu-

tion of the other, unless there should be as miraculous a multiplication of treasure for man's avarice, as there was of loaves for their hunger? (Matt. xvi. 9.) It was a good answer which the ambassadors of an oppressed province made to Antony: "If, O emperor, thou wilt have double taxes from us, thou must help us to double springs and harvests." And sure God must be at the expense of a new creation; make us a double world, if he should oblige himself to satisfy all the unreasonable appetites of men; and if he satisfy not all, why should any particular person look that his alone should be indulged to?

6. Yet, as unreasonable as it is, the most of us do betray such a persuasion. No man is discontented that there are lower as well as higher degrees in the world,—that there are poor as well as rich,—but all sensible men assent to the fitness of it: yet if themselves happen to be set in the lower form, they exclaim, as if the whole order of the world were subverted; which is a palpable indication that they think that Providence, which governs others, should serve them, and distribute to them not what it but themselves think good. This immoderate self-love is the spring and root of most of our complaints, makes us such unequal judges in our own concerns, and prompts us to put in caveats and exceptions on our own behalf, as David did on his son's, "See that thou hurt not the young man Absalom" (2 Sam.

xviii. 5); as if God were to manage the government of the world with a particular regard to our liking, and were, like the angels at Sodom (Gen. xix. 22), to "do nothing till we had got into Zoar," — had all our demands secured to us.

7. It would indeed astonish a considering man to see, that although the concerns of men are all disposed by an unerring Wisdom, and acknowledged by themselves to be so, yet that scarce any man is pleased. The truth is, we have generally in us the worse part of the leveller's principle; and though we can very contentedly behold multitudes below us, yet are impatient to see any above us; not only "the foot" (to use the apostle's simile) "complains that it is not the hand, but the ear because it is not the eye" (1 Cor. xii. 15, 16). Not only the lowermost, but the higher ranks of men are uneasy, if there be any one step above them. Nay, so importunate is this aspiring humour, that we see men are forced to feed it, though but with air and shadows. He that cannot make any real advance in his quality, will yet do it in effigy, in all little gaieties and pageantries of it. Every degree, in these respects, not only emulates but imitates its superior, till at last, by that impatience of their proper distance, they make it greater, and sink even below their first state by their ridiculous profusion. Indeed, the world seems to be so overrun with this vanity, that there is little visible distinction of degrees; and

one had need go to the herald's office to know men's qualities; for neither their habit nor equipage do now-a-days inform us with any certainty.

8. But by all this it appears that men look on themselves only as single persons, without reference to the community whereof they are members. For did they consider that, they would endeavour rather to become the places wherein they were set, by doing the duties belonging to them, than be perpetually projecting for a change. A tree that is every year transplanted will never bear fruit; and a mind that is always hurried from its proper station will scarce ever do good in any. This is excellently expressed to us by Solomon, "As a bird that wandereth from his nest, so is a man that wandereth from his place" (Prov. xxvii. 8). It is easy to divine the fate of those young ones from whom the dam wanders; and it is as easy to guess how the duties of that place will be performed, whose owner is always upon the wing and making towards another. I wish we had not too costly experiments, both in Church and State, of the truth of this observation. Alas, we forget that we are all servants to the same Master, and that he is to appoint in what office we shall serve him! How should we like it in any of our own families, to have an inferior officer leave his work undone, because he has more mind to be major-domo? Yet this insolence we every day repeat towards God, sullenly dispute his order, and,

unless we may choose our own employments, will do nothing.

9. It is evident this perverse temper of mankind breeds a great deal of mischief and disturbance in the world, but would breed arrant confusion and subversion if it were suffered to have its full range. If God permit but one ambitious spirit to break loose in an age, as the instrument of his wrath, what destruction does it oftentimes make! how does it "cause the whole earth to tremble, and shake kingdoms!" as is said of Nebuchadnezzar (Is. xiv. 16), and may be said of many others of those wholesale robbers who have dignified the trade. But if every aspiring humour should be as prosperous, where would it find fuel to maintain the flame? No doubt every age produces men of as unbounded desires as Alexander or Cæsar, but God gives them not the same opportunities to trouble the world; and accordingly, in the more petty ambitions of private men, he often orders it so that those soaring minds can find no benign gale to help their mounting. He that sets bounds to the sea, saying, "Hitherto shalt thou come, and no farther; and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over" (Jer. v. 22),—does also depress the swelling pride of men, hangs clogs and weights upon them, that they cannot rise to their affected height. For though we are all willing to forget it, yet God remembers

that he is the Rector of the universe, and will assert his dominion. The subtilest contrivance cannot circumvent him, the most daring pretender cannot wrest any thing out of his hand ; " the Lord will still be King, be the people never so impatient" (Ps. xcix. 1). It will therefore sure be as well our prudence as our duty, to " be still and know that he is God" (Ps. xlv. 10), with an humble dereliction of our own wills acquiesce in his, and not by ineffective strugglings provoke, whom we are sure never to subdue. We may, like unmanaged horses, foam and fret, but still God has the bridle in our jaws, and we cannot advance a step farther than he permits us. Why should we then create torment to ourselves by our repinings, which only sets us farther from our aims? It is God's declared method to exalt the lowly ; and it is observable in the first two kings of Israel, who were of God's immediate election, that he surprised them with that dignity when they were about mean and humble employments,—the one searching his father's asses, the other keeping his father's sheep : and would men honestly and diligently exercise themselves in the business of their proper calling, they might perhaps find it a more direct road to advancement than all the sinister arts by which ambitious men endeavour to climb. Solomon sets it down as an aphorism, " Seest thou a man diligent in his business, he shall stand before kings, he shall not stand before mean men" (Prov. xxii. 29). But whether it happen to have that effect

or no, it will have a better ; for it will sweeten his present condition, divert his mind from mutinous reflections on other men's height, and his own lowness ; for it is commonly men who mind not their work that are at so much leisure to gaze. He that carefully plies his own business will have his thoughts more concentered : and doubtless it is no small happiness to have them so ; for it is their gadding too much abroad, looking on other men's conditions, that sends them back (like Dinah defloured) to put all in an uproar at home. The son of Sirach speaks with transportation of the state even of him that labours and is content, and calls it " a sweet life " (Ecclus. xl. 18) ; and certainly it is infinitely more so than that of the greatest prince whose mind swells beyond his territories.

10. Upon all these considerations, it cannot but appear very reasonable that we should leave God to govern the world ; not be putting in, like the sons of Zebedee, for the highest seats, but continually rest ourselves where he has placed us, till his providence (not our own designs) advance us. We can no where be so obscure as to be hid from His eyes, who, as he valued the widow's mite above the great oblations of the rich, so he will no less graciously accept the humble endeavours of the mean than the more eminent services of the mighty ; himself having declared, that he accepts " according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not " (2 Cor. viii. 12). So that in what rank soever a

man is set, he has still the same opportunity of approving himself to God ; and though in the eye of the world he be a vessel of dishonour, yet in the day when God comes to "make up his jewels" (Mal. iii. 17), there will be another estimate made of him who regularly moves in his own sphere. And sure he that sits down in this acquiescence is a happier man than he that enjoys the greatest worldly splendours, but infinitely more so than he who impatiently covets but cannot attain them ; for such a man puts himself upon a perpetual rack, keeps his appetites up at the utmost stretch, and yet has nothing wherewith to satisfy them. Let therefore our ease, if not our duty, prompt us to acquiescence, and a ready submission to God's disposals ; to which we have yet a farther inducement from that distinct care he hath over every man's peculiar, by which he proportions to him what is really best for him ; of which we are farther to consider in the next chapter,





CHAPTER VII.

OF GOD'S PARTICULAR PROVIDENCE.



Tis the imperfection of our finite nature that we cannot at once attend to divers things, but the more vehement our intention is upon one, the greater is our neglect of the rest. But God's infinity cannot be so bounded; his eyes at once see, and his providence at once orders, all the most distant and disparate things in the world. He is not such an Epicurean Deity¹ as to sequester himself wholly to the enjoyment of his own felicity, and to despise the concerns of poor mortals; but though he have his "dwelling so high, yet he humbleth himself to behold the things in heaven and earth" (Ps. cxiii. 5). Nor does his providence confine itself to the more

¹ "Gods in their very nature must enjoy
An endless life, and peace without alloy;
From man's concerns remov'd and far apart,—
From perils free,—free from all grief of heart,—
They, self-sufficient, naught of ours can need,
Nor more regard the good than evil deed."

LUCRETIVS, book i. 57-63.

splendid and greater parts of management, the conduct of empires and states, but it descends to the lowest parts of his creation, to the fowls of the air, to the lilies of the field; and then sure our Saviour's inference as to mankind is irrefragable, "Are ye not much better than they?" (Matt. vi. 26.) If a sparrow (as he elsewhere tells his disciples) cannot fall to the ground without God's particular notice, surely no human creature is less considerable to him; nay, if our very hairs are numbered, we cannot think the excrescence is of more value than the stock, but must conclude that God with a particular advertence watches over the concerns of every man.

2. Now God being infinitely good cannot thus attend us upon any insidious design of doing us mischief; he watches over us as a guardian, not as a spy; and directs his observation to the more seasonable adapting his benefits: and as he is thus gracious in designing our advantage, so he is no less wise in contriving it. "All things," says the wise man, "are not profitable for all men" (Ecclus. xxxvii. 28). Indeed nothing is absolutely good but God; all created things are good or ill in reference to that to which they are applied. Meat is good; but to a surfeited stomach it is not only nauseous but dangerous. Fire is good; but if put in our bosoms, not only burns our clothes but flesh. And as human wisdom directs the right application of these and the like, so the Supreme and Divine

orders events according to the disposition of the person concerned ; " he knows our frame " (Ps. ciii. 14), and discerns what operation such or such things will have upon us ; while we, who know neither ourselves nor them, can make but random guesses and worse choices. And sure he that does but thus in the general acknowledge God's providence, goodness, and wisdom (which he is no Christian who does not), has a sufficient amulet against all his solitudes, much more his repinings. He cannot think he suffers unawares to Him who sees all things ; he cannot think his sufferings are designed for ill to him, because they are disposed by Him who intends and projects his good ; nor can he fear those intentions can miscarry, which are guided by an infinite and unerring wisdom, and backed by an uncontrollable power. And sure this is, as the apostle speaks, " strong consolation " (Heb. vi. 18), if we would but duly apply it.

3. Yet, because general notions do often make but light impressions on us, it may not be amiss to make a little more inspection, and to observe how applicable they are to the several kinds of our discontents. Now those may be reduced to two ; for either we are troubled at the want of something we desire, or at the suffering of something we would avert ; so that the two notions of privative and positive divide between them all our affliction.

4. The first of these is usually the most comprehensive ; for there are few who have not more tor-

ment from the apprehension of somewhat they want than from the smart of any thing they feel; and indeed whilst our desires are so vagrant and exorbitant, they will be sure to furnish matter enough for our discontents; but certainly there is not in the world such a charm for them as the consideration that God is more wise to discern, and more careful to provide what is really good for us than we ourselves. We poor purblind creatures look only on the surface of things; and if we see a beautiful appearance, somewhat that invites our senses, we court it with the utmost earnestness; but God penetrates deeper; he sees to the bottom both of us and those things we desire, and finds often that though they may please our appetite, they will hurt our health; and will no more give them to us than a careful father will to his child those gilded poisons he cries for. Perhaps this man is taken with the enchanting music of fame, likes not his own obscure station, but would fain present himself upon a more public theatre, come into the eye and crowd of the world: but how little does he know how he shall act his part there — whether he shall come off with a plaudit or a hiss! He may render himself but the more public spectacle of scorn; or if he do not that, he may by a better success feed up his vainglory to such a bulk as may render him too great weight for that tottering pinnacle whereon he stands; and so after he has made a towering circle, he may fall back with more ignominy to his first

point. Another, it may be, no less eagerly desires wealth, thinks (as once Croesus¹ did) that he that abounds in treasure cannot be empty of felicity; but, alas, how knows he how he shall employ it? There are two contrary temptations that attend riches,—riots and covetousness; and he is sure a little too confident that dares promise himself, that when there is such odds against him, he shall certainly choose the one just mean; and if he do not, he does only inflame his account at the great audit. Besides, the more wealth he has, the fairer booty he is to the avarice of others; and it has been often
 v seen, that many a man had not died so poor, if he had lived less rich. Another, perhaps, thinks not himself so much to want wealth as children to heir it, and complains with Abraham, “Lord, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless?” (Gen. xv. 2); yet how knows he whether that child he so much desires “shall be a wise man or a fool” (Eccles. ii. 19), a comfort or a vexation to himself, if he live to see his proof? and if he do not, he does but project for an access to his dying cares in what hands to leave him. Rachel solicited this satisfaction with the greatest impatience, “Give me children, or I die” (Gen. xxx. 1); and it is observable that the grant of her wish proved the loss of her life (Gen. xxxv. 19).

5. Thus in these and innumerable other instances.

¹ See some account of him in Wilberforce's “Five Empires,” Englishman's Library, ch. x. p. 75-77.

we drive on blindfold, and very often impetuously pursue that which would ruin us; and were God as shortsighted as we, into what precipices should we every minute hurry ourselves! or were he so unkind as to consider our importunity more than our interest, we should quickly sink under the weight of our own wishes; and as Juvenal, in his tenth satire, excellently observes, perish by the success and grant of our prayers. I suppose there is no man that soberly recollects the events of his life but can experimentally say, he has sometimes desired things which would have been to his mischief if he had had them, and that himself has after looked on the denial as a mercy; as, on the other side, when he has prospered in his aims, and had what his soul lusted after, it has been but like the quails of the Israelites, a conviction and punishment rather than a satisfaction. And now surely God may complain of us as he did of Israel, "How long will it be ere you believe me?" (Num. xiv. 11.) After all the attestations he has given of his care and providence over us; after all the experiments we have had of the folly of our own elections, we cannot yet be brought either to distrust ourselves, or rely upon him. We will still be choosing, and look on him as no farther concerned than as the executioner of our designs.

6. This is certainly a strange perverseness, and such as no sensible man would be guilty of in any other instance. In all our secular affairs we trust

those whom we have cause to think understand them better than ourselves, and rely upon men in their own faculty. We put our estates in the lawyer's hand, our bodies into the physician's, and submit to their advice, though it be against our humour, merely because we account them more competent judges. Yet this deference we cannot be persuaded to pay to God, but will still be prescribing to him, and are very angry if his dispensations do not exactly answer our fancies. And can we offer him a greater affront than thus to distrust him? What is it but interpretatively to deny either his wisdom or his goodness, or both, and so derogate from him in two of his essential attributes? for there can be no rational account given by any who believe those, why they should not remit their whole concerns to him. So that the short account is, that in our distrusts we either deny him to be God, or ourselves to be men, by resisting the most evident dictates of that reason which distinguishes us from brutes; for certainly there is not in human discourse a more irrefragable maxim, than that we ought for our own sakes to resign ourselves to him, who we are infallibly sure can and will choose better for us than we for ourselves.

7. This was so apparent by mere natural light, that Socrates advised men to pray only for blessings in general, and leave the particular kind of them to God's election, who best knows what is good for us: and sure this is such a piece of divinity as ex-

tremely reproaches us Christians, who cannot match a heathen in his implicit faith to God. Nay, indeed, it is the vilest defamation upon God himself, that we, who pretend to know him more, should trust him less. So that we see our repinings do not terminate in their own proper guilt, but do in their consequences swell higher, and our discontents propagate themselves into blasphemy; for while we impatiently complain of our wants, we do tacitly tax God to want either that wisdom, power, or love, whereby he should supply us. And sure he must be very atheistical to whom this will not give a competent prejudice against this sin.

8. And this very consideration will equally pre-judge the other branch of our discontents, I mean those which repine at the ills we suffer. And not only our privative, but our positive afflictions may by it have their bitterness taken off; for the same goodness and wisdom which denies those things we like, because they are hurtful for us, does upon the very same reason give us those distasteful things which he sees profitable. A wise physician does not only diet, but, if occasion be, purge his patient also; and surely there is not such a purifier, such a cleanser of the soul, as are afflictions, if we do not (like disorderly patients) frustrate their efficacy by the irregular management of ourselves under them.



CHAPTER VIII.

OF THE ADVANTAGE OF AFFLICTIONS.

IF were the work of a volume to give an exact and minute account of the benefit of afflictions. I shall only point at some of the more general and obvious. And first, it is one of the most awakening calls to repentance; and to this end it is that God most usually designs it. We see the whole scene of it, Hos. v. 15: "I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face; in their affliction they will seek me early;" and in the very next verse we find this voice of God echoed forth by a penitential note, "Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up." Thus we find the brethren of Joseph, though there had a long interval passed betwixt their barbarous usage of him and his feigned rigour to them, yet when they saw themselves distressed by the one, then they began to recollect the

other, saying, "We are verily guilty concerning our brother" (Gen. xlii. 21). Prosperity is an intoxicating thing; and there are few brains strong enough to bear it; it lays us asleep, and amuses us with pleasant dreams; whilst in the mean time Satan rifles our treasures, and spoils us, by the deceitful charms of sin, of our innocency and real happiness. And can there be a more friendly office done for a man in this condition than to rouse him, and bring him to apprehend the designs that are laid against him? And this is the errand on which afflictions are sent; so that we have reason to look on them as our friends and confederates, that intend our rescue, and to take the alarm they give us, and diligently seek out those intestine enemies of which they warn us. And he that instead of this quarrels at their interposing, thinks them his "enemies because they tell him the truth" (Gal. iv. 16); does miserably pervert "the counsel of God against himself" (Luke vii. 30); and may at last verify his own jealousies, and by so provoking an ingratitude convert those into the wounds of an enemy, which were originally meant as the corrections of a father.

2. And as afflictions do thus in general admonish us of sins, so it pleases God most frequently so to model and frame them, that they bear the very image and impress of those particular guilts they are to chastise, and are the dark shadows that attend our gay delights or flagrant insolencies. The wise man observes, that the turning the Egyptian

waters into blood was a manifest reproof of that cruel commandment for the murdering of the Hebrew infants (Wisd. xii. 5). And surely we might in most, if not all our sufferings, see some such corresponding circumstances as may lead us to the immediate provoking cause of it. God, who does all things in number, weight, and measure, does in punishments also observe a symmetry and proportion, and adapts them not only to the heinousness, but even the very specific kind of our crimes. The only fixed immutable rule he has given for his vicerents on earth to punish by, is that in the case of murder, which is we see grounded on this rule of proportion, "He that sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed" (Gen. ix. 6). And though he have now rescinded the inferior retaliations of the "eye for the eye, the tooth for the tooth" (Exod. xxi. 24)—probably for the hardness of our hearts, because he saw our revengeful natures would be too much pleased with it,—yet he has not precluded himself from acting by those measures; but we see he does very often signally make men feel the smart of those violences or injustice they have used to others. Of this, sacred story affords several examples (as Adonibezek, Judges i. 6; and Ahab, 1 Kings xxi. 19), and profane many more, and daily experience and observation most of all. And though this method of retaliation is not always so evident and apparent to the world, because men's sins are not always so, yet I believe if men would duly re-

collect, it would be for the most part discernible to their own consciences; and they would apparently see that their calamities did but trace the footsteps of their sins.

3. Now if we rightly weigh this, we cannot but think it a very advantageous circumstance. We are naturally blind, when we look inward; and if we have not some adventitious light to clear the object, will be very apt to overlook it: therefore, since the end of all our afflictions is our repentance, it is a wise and gracious disposal, that they do thus point to us those particular sins of which we are to repent. The body of sin will not be destroyed in the whole entire bulk, but must be dismembered, pulled to pieces limb by limb. He that attacks it otherwise will be like Sertorius's soldier, who ineffectively tugged at the horse's tail to get it off at once, when he that pulled it hair by hair quickly did it. Therefore, as it is a great part of our spiritual wisdom to know in what especial parts the Samson-like strength of our corruptions lies, so it is a great instance of God's care of us, thus by his corrections to discipline and instruct us in it.

4. In all our afflictions, therefore, it is our concern nicely and critically to observe them. I mean, not to enhance our murmurs and complaints, but to learn by them what is God's peculiar controversy against us. This is, indeed, to "hear the rod, and who hath appointed it" (Micah vi. 9). Let him, therefore, that suffers in any of his concerns examine

whether he have not some corresponding guilt which answers to it, "as face answers face" (Prov. xxvii. 19). He that is impoverished in his estate, let him consider, first, how he acquired it; whether there were not something of fraud or injustice, which like a cancerous humour mixed in its very elements and constitution, and ate out its bowels; or whether some sacrilegious prize, some coal from the altar, have not fired his nest. Or, if nothing can be charged upon the acquist, let him consider how he has used it; whether he hath not made it the fuel of his lusts in riots and excesses, or the object of his adoration in an inordinate value of it. In like manner, he who is afflicted in his body, and groans under the torment of some grievous disease, may very seasonably interrogate himself, whether it have not been contracted by his vice; whether "his bones be not" (in a more literal sense than Job meant it) "full of the sins of his youth" (Job xx. 11); and his surfeiting and drunkenness be not the cause "that his soul," as the Psalmist speaks, "abhors all manner of meat, and is even hard at death's door" (Ps. cvii. 18); or, at least, whether the not employing his health and strength to those purposes for which it was given, is not the reason of its being withdrawn. He also that is invaded in his reputation, that lies under some great infamy, is to consider whether it be not deserved; whether some part, if not the whole guilt of which he is accused, stick not to him; or if he be clear in that particular

instance, whether some concealed sin of his would not, if it were known, incur as great scandal; for in that case he has in right forfeited his reputation, and God may make the seizure as well by an unjust as a just accusation. Or, if his heart accuse him not here, yet let him farther reflect, whether his vain-glorious pursuits of praise, and high conceits of himself, have not made this an apt and necessary humiliation for him. Or, lastly, let him recollect how he has behaved himself towards others in this kind; whether he hath had a just tenderness of his neighbour's fame, or hath not rather exposed and prostituted it. In these, and many other instances, such a particular scrutiny would, in all probability, discover the affinity and cognation between our guilts and our punishments; and by marking out the spring and fountain-head, direct us how to stop or divert the current. And he that would diligently employ himself in this inquisition, would find little leisure and less cause to condole his afflictions, but would divert all his complaints upon himself, "accept of the punishment of his iniquity, and thank the Lord for thus giving him warning" (Ps. xvi. 8).

5. A second benefit which God designs us in our afflictions, is the weaning us from the world, to disentangle us from its fetters and charms, and draw us to himself. We read in the story of the deluge, that so long as the earth was covered with waters the very raven was contented to take shelter

in the ark ; but when all was fair and dry, even the dove finally forsook it (Gen. viii. 12). And it is much so with us ; the worst of men will commonly in distresses have recourse to God ; the very heathen mariners in a storm could rebuke Jonah for not calling upon his God (Jon. i. 6) ; when yet the very best of us are apt to forget him amidst the blandishments and insinuations of prosperity. The kind aspects of the world are very enchanting, apt to inveigle and besot us ; and therefore it is God's care over us to let us sometimes see her more averting countenance in her frowns and storms, that, as children frightened by some ugly appearance, we may run into the arms of our Father. Alas, were all things exactly fitted to our humours here, when should we think of a remove ? and had not death some harbingers to prepare us for him, what a surprising guest would he be to us ! It is storied of Antigonus, that seeing a soldier in his camp of so daring a courage that he always courted the most hazardous attempts, and observing him also of a very infirm sickly habit, he took a particular care of him, and by medicines and good attendance recovered him ; which no sooner he had done but the man grew more cautious, and would no longer expose himself as formerly ; and gave this reason for it, that now he was healthy his life was of some value to him, and not to be hazarded at the same rate as when it was only a burden. And should God cure all our complaints, render us perfectly at ease,

I fear too many of us would be of the soldier's mind,—think our lives too good to resign to him, much more to hazard for him, as our Christianity in many cases obliges us. The son of Sirach observes how “dreadful death is to a man that is at rest in his possessions, that hath abundance of all things, and hath nothing to vex him;” nay, he descends much lower, and puts in him “who is yet able to receive meat” (Ecclus. xli. 1). The truth is, we do so passionately dote upon the world, that, like besotted lovers, we can bear a great deal of ill-usage before we quit our pursuit. Any little slight favour atones us after multiplied affronts; and we must be disciplined by repeated disappointments ere we can withdraw our confidence. But how fatally secure should we be, if God should permit this siren¹ always to entertain us with her music, and should not, by some discordant grating notes, interrupt our raptures, and recall us to sober thoughts!

6. Indeed, it is one of the highest instances of God's love, and of his clemency also, thus to project our reducement. We were all in our baptism affianced to him with a particular abrenunciation of the world, so that we cannot without the greatest disloyalty cast ourselves into its embraces; and yet, when we have thus “broken the covenant of our God” (Prov. ii. 17), he does not pursue us with a

¹ *Siren*,—a goddess who enticed men by singing, and devoured them; any mischievous enticer.

jealous rage, with the severity which an abused rivalled kindness would suggest; doth not give us a bill of divorce, and disclaim his relation; but contrives how he may reclaim and bring us back to himself. The transcendency of this lenity God excellently describes, by the prophet, in the case of Israel: "They say, If a man put away his wife, and she become another man's, shall he return unto her again? but thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return unto me, saith the Lord" (Jer. iii. 1): and this, though a great height of indulgence, is no more than he daily repeats to us. After we have basely adulterated with the world, converted our affections from God to it, he does not give us over, abandon us to our lewd course and consequent ruin, but still invites our return; and lest that may not serve, he does, with a great deal of holy artifice, essay to break that accursed league into which we are entered, pulls off the disguise in which the world courted us, and makes us see it as it is in itself,—a scene of "vanity and vexation of spirit" (Eccles. i. 14).

7. And as he does this in general, so also with a particular application to those temporal satisfactions wherewith we were most transported. The things to which we are more indifferent do not so much endanger us; it is those upon which we have more vehemently set our hearts, which become our snares and awake his jealousy; and accordingly we frequently see that it is in those he chooses to cross

us. How often does it happen that those which are enamoured of themselves, dote upon their own features, do meet with some disease or accident which blasts their beauty, withers that fair flower, and makes their winter overtake their spring! So in our friends and relations, it is usually seen we soonest lose those for whom we have the greatest, the most immoderate passion. If there be one fondling among our children, it is odds but that is taken away, or made as much the object of our grief and sorrow as ever it was of our joy and love. When God sees our hearts so excessively cleave to any transitory thing, he knows it is necessary to sever them; for whilst we have such clogs upon us, "our souls will cleave to the dust" (Ps. cxix. 1), will not be able to soar up to the higher region for which they are designed.

8. In a word, God so loves us, that he removes whatever he sees will obstruct that intimate union which he desires with us: and sure this is so obliging, that though he should bid us to our loss, though he could not recompense us for what he takes from us, yet we must be very ill-natured, if we can be angry at so much kindness. But when to this is added, that all this is principally, nay, solely designed for our advantage; that God takes from us all these empty, delusory contentments, merely that he may instate us in solid and durable joys,—we betray as much ignorance of our interest as insensibleness of our obligation, if we repine that God makes us so^o

much his care. It is true, indeed, the things to which we have so inordinately adhered do stick so close, that they cannot be pulled away without some pain; yet for our corporal security we can endure the sundering of parts that do not only cleave, but grow to us. He that has a gangrened member suffers it to be cut off to save his whole body, and does not revile, but thank and reward the surgeon; yet where our souls are concerned, and where the things have no native union with us, but are only cemented by our passions, we are impatient of the method, and think God deals very hardly with us not to let us perish with what we love. The sum of all is this, God, though he be abundantly condescending, yet he will never stoop so low as to share his interest in us with the world: if we will devote ourselves to it, it is not all our empty forms of service will satisfy him; if we cannot divorce our hearts from it, he will divorce himself eternally from us: and the case being thus, we are sure very ill advised if we do not contentedly resign ourselves to his methods, and cheerfully endure them, how sharp soever. The only expedient we have for our own ease, is to shorten the cure by giving our assistance, and not by strugglings to render it more difficult and painful. Let us entirely surrender our wills to him; and when we have done that, we may without much pain let him take any thing else. But the more difficult we find it to be disentangled from the world, the greater should our caution be

against all future engagements to it. If our escape hath been, as the apostle says, "so as by fire" (Jude 23), with much smart and hazard, let us at least have so much wit as the common proverb allows children, and not again expose ourselves; let us never glue our hearts to any external thing, but let all the concerns of the world hang loose about us: by that means we shall be able to put them off insensibly, whenever God calls for them; or perhaps we shall prevent his calling for them at all, it being for the most part our too close adhesion to them which prompts him to it.

9. A third advantage of afflictions is, that it is a mark and signature of our adoption, a witness of our legitimation. "What son is he," saith the apostle, "whom the father chastiseth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons" (Heb. xii. 7, 8). Jacob clad his darling Joseph in a parti-coloured coat; and God's favourites do here wear a livery, interwoven with a mixture of dark and gloomy colours; their "long white robes" are laid up for them against they come to the "marriage of the Lamb" (Rev. xix. 7). Indeed, we much mistake the design of Christianity, if we think it calls us to a condition of ease and security. It might suit well enough with the votaries of the golden calf to "sit down to eat and drink, and rise up to play" (Exod. xxxii. 6); but the disciples of the crucified

Saviour are trained to another discipline; our profession enters us into a state of warfare; and accordingly our very baptismal engagement runs all in military terms, and we are not only servants of Christ's family, but soldiers of his camp. Now we know in a war men must not expect to pass their time in ease and softness, but, besides all the dangers and difficulties of the combat, have many other hardships to endure — hunger and thirst, heat and cold, hard lodgings and weary marches; and he that is too nice for those will not long stick to his colours. And it is the same in our spiritual warfare, — many pressures and sufferings are annexed to it; and our passive valour is no less tried than our active. In respect of this it is, that our Saviour admonishes his proselytes to compute first the difficulties incident to their profession: and that he may not ensnare us by proposing too easy terms, he bids us reckon upon the worst, and tells us, that he "that forsakes not all that he hath shall not be his disciple" (Luke xiv. 26); "and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts xiv. 22). Indeed, it were very absurd for us to expect easier conditions, when these are the same to which our Leader has submitted. The "Captain of our salvation was perfected by sufferings" (Heb. ii. 10); "and if it behoved Christ to suffer before he entered into his glory" (Luke xxiv. 46), it were insolent madness

for us to look to be carried thither upon our beds of ivory, or from the noise of our harps and viols be immediately rapt into the choir of angels.

10. This has been so much considered by pious men, that they have looked upon their secular prosperities with fear and jealousy; and many have solemnly petitioned for crosses, as thinking them the necessary attestation of their sonship, and means of assimilation to their elder Brother. Why, then, should that which was so desirable to them appear so formidable to us? or why should we so vehemently deprecate what they so earnestly invited? If we indeed think it a privilege to be the sons of God and fellow-heirs with Christ, why do we grudge at the condition? The Roman captain tells St. Paul, that he obtained the immunities of a Roman “with a great sum” (Acts xxii. 28); and shall we expect so much a nobler and more advantageous adoption perfectly gratis,—look that God should change his whole economy for our ease—give us an eternal inheritance, discharged of those temporal incumbrances himself has annexed to it? This were sure as unjust a hope as it would be a vain one. When David had that ensnaring proposal made him, of being the king’s son-in-law (1 Sam. xviii. 21), he set such a value upon the dignity, that he despised the difficulty of the condition: and sure we must have very low abject souls, if, when so infinitely a higher advancement is sincerely offered us, we can suffer any apprehension of hardship to

divert us. In a word, let us remember that of the apostle, "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him" (2 Tim. ii. 12). And though our afflictions be in themselves not joyous, but grievous, yet when they are considered as the earnest of our future inheritance, they put on an another face, and may rather enamour than fright us.

11. A fourth advantage of afflictions is, that they excite our compassions towards others. There is nothing qualifies us so rightly to estimate the sufferings of others as the having ourselves felt them; without this our apprehensions of them are as dull and confused as a blind man's of colours, or a deaf man's of sounds. They "that stretch themselves upon their couches, that eat the lambs out of the flock and the calves out of the midst of the stall, that chant to the sound of the viol, drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments,—will not much be grieved with the afflictions of Joseph" (Amos vi. 4). Nay, so necessary is our experience towards our commiseration, that we see it was thought a requisite accomplishment of our High-priest (that highest example of unbounded compassion); and therefore saith the apostle, "It behoved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High-priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people: for in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted" (Heb. ii.

17, 18). But if he, whose mere sense of our miseries brought him down to us, chose this expedient to advance his pity, how necessary is it to our petrified bowels! And since God has assigned our mercies to our brethren as the standard by which he will proportion his to us, it is more ours than their advantage to have them enlarged; so that when, by making us taste of their cup, acquainting us with the bitter relish of their sufferings, he prepares us to a Christian sympathy with them, it is but a remoter way of obliging and qualifying us for a more ample portion of his mercy. Nay, besides the profit, there is an honour accrues to us by it. Compassion is one of the best properties of our nature, and we unman ourselves when we put it off: nay, more, it is an attribute of the Divinity; and the more we advance in it, the closer approaches we make to him. And therefore we have all reason to bless him for that discipline by which he promotes in us so excellent, so necessary a grace.

12. A fifth benefit of affliction is, that it is an improvement of devotion,—sets us with more heartiness to our prayers. Whilst prosperity flows in upon us, we bathe ourselves in its streams, but are very apt to forget its Source; so that God is fain to stop the current, leave us dry and parched, that our needs may make us do what our gratitude would not,—trace our blessings up to the original Spring, and both acknowledge and invoke him as the Author of all our good. This effect of afflictions is observed

by the prophet: "Lord, in trouble have they visited thee, they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them" (Is. xxvi. 16). And I believe I may appeal to every man's experience, whether his prayers be not more frequent, and more hearty too, when he is under some distress. Then how importunate are we in our petitions! how profuse in our vows and promises! saying with Israel, "Deliver us only, we pray thee, this day. And they put away the strange gods from among them, and served the Lord" (Judges x. 15). I confess it is no good indication of our temper, that we need thus to be put in the press ere we will yield any thing: yet since we are so disingenuous, it is a mercy in God to adapt his methods to us, to extort when we will not give; and if he can have no free-will offering, yet at least to exact his tribute. Nor does he design the effect of this should cease with the calamity that raised it, but expects our compelled addresses should bring us into the way of voluntary ones, and happily ensnare us into piety. And indeed herein are we worse than brutish, if it do not. We think it a barbarous rudeness to engage a man in our affairs, and, as soon as we have served our own turns, never take farther notice of him. Nay, indeed, the very beasts may lecture us in this piece of morality, many of them paying a signal gratitude where they have received benefits: and shall we not come up at least to their pitch? Shall not the endearment of our deliverance bring our Deliverer into some repute

and consideration with us, and make us desire to keep up an acquaintance and intercourse with him? Yet, if ingenuity work not with us, let interest at least prevail; and the remembrance how soon we may need him again, admonish us not to make ourselves strangers to him. God complains of Israel, "Wherefore say my people, We are lords; we will come no more at thee?" (Jer. ii. 31)—a very insolent folly, to renounce that dependence by which alone they subsisted; and no less will it be in any of us, if we stop our recourse to him because we have had advantage by it. We have no assurance that the same occasion shall not recur; but with what face can we then resume that intercourse which in the interval we despised? So that, if we have but any ordinary providence, we shall still so celebrate past rescues as to continue in a capacity of begging more; and then we cannot but also confess the benefit of those first calamities which inspired our devotion, and taught us to pray in earnest, and will be ashamed that our thanks should be uttered in a fainter accent than our petitions; or our daily spiritual concerns should be more coldly solicited than our temporal accidental ones.

13. Nor is it only our devotion that is thus improved by our distresses, but many other graces,—our faith, our hope, our patience, our Christian sufferance and fortitude. It is no triumph of faith to trust God for those good things which he gives us in hand—this is rather to walk by sense than faith;

but to rely on him in the greatest destitution, "and against hope to believe in hope," this is the faith of a true child of Abraham, and will be "imputed" to us (as it was to him) "for righteousness" (Rom. iv. 22). So also our patience owes all its opportunities of exercise to our afflictions, and consequently owes also a great part of its being to them; for we know desuetude will lose habits. What imaginable use is there of patience where there is nothing to suffer? In our prosperous state we may indeed employ our temperance, our humility, our caution; but patience seems then a useless virtue, nay indeed, for aught we know, may be counterfeit, till adversity bring it to the test. And yet this is the most glorious accomplishment of a Christian, that which most eminently conforms him to the image of his Saviour, whose whole life was a perpetual exercise of this grace; and therefore we love our ease too well, if we are unwilling to buy this pearl at any price.

14. Lastly, our thankfulness is (at least ought to be) increased by our distresses. It is very natural for us to reflect with value and esteem upon those blessings we have lost, and we too often do it to aggravate our discontent; but sure the more rational use of it is to raise our thankfulness for the time wherein we enjoyed them. Nay, not only our former enjoyments, but even our present deprivations, deserve our gratitude, if we consider the happy advantages we may reap from them. If we

will perversely cast them away, that unworthy contempt pays no scores ; for we still stand answerable in God's account for the good he designed, and we might have had by it ; and we become liable to a new charge, for our ingratitude in thus " despising the chastisement of the Lord" (Heb. xii. 5).

15. And now, if all these benefits of afflictions (which are yet but imperfectly recited) may be thought worth considering, it cannot but reconcile us to the sharpest of God's methods, unless we will own ourselves such mere animals as to have no other apprehensions than what our bodily senses convey to us. For sure, he that has reason enough to understand that he has an immortal soul, cannot but assent that its interests should be served, though with the displacency of his flesh. Yet, even in regard of that, our murmurings are oft very unjust ; for we do many times ignorantly prejudge God's design towards us even in temporals, who frequently makes a little transient uneasiness the passage to secular felicities. Moses, when he fled out of Egypt, probably little thought that he should return thither a " god unto Pharaoh" (Ex. iv. 16) ; and as little did Joseph, when he was brought thither a slave, that he was to be a ruler there ; yet as distant as those states were, the divine Providence had so connected them, that the one depends upon the other. And certainly we may often observe the like over-ruling hand in our own distresses, that those events which we have entertained with the

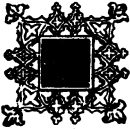
greatest regret have in the consequences been very beneficial to us.

16. To conclude: we have certainly, both from speculation and experience, abundant matter to calm all our disquiets, to satisfy our distrusts, and to fix in us an entire resignation to God's disposals, who has designs which we cannot penetrate, but none which we need fear, unless we ourselves pervert them. We have our Saviour's word for it, that "he will not give us a stone when we ask bread, nor a scorpion when we ask a fish" (Matt. vii. 9). Nay, his love secures us yet farther from the errors of our own wild choice, and does not give us those stones and scorpions which we importune for. Let us, then, leave our concerns to Him who best knows them, and make it our sole care to entertain his dispensations with as much submission and duty, as he dispenses them with love and wisdom. And if we can but do so, we may dare all the power of earth, and hell too, to make us miserable; for be our afflictions what they can, we are sure they are but what we, in some respect or other, need; be they privative or positive, the want of what we wish, or the suffering of what we wish not, they are the disposals of Him who cannot err; and we shall finally have cause to say with the psalmist, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted" (Ps. cxix. 71).



CHAPTER IX.

OF OUR MISFORTUNES COMPARED WITH OTHER MEN'S.

E come now to impress an equally just and useful consideration,—the comparing our misfortunes with those of other men; and he that does that will certainly see so little cause to think himself singular, that he will not find himself superlative in calamity; for there is no man living that can with reason affirm himself to be the very unhappiest man, there being innumerable distresses of others which he knows not of, and consequently cannot bring them in balance with his own. A multitude of men there are whose persons he knows not, and even of those he does, he may be much a stranger to their distresses; many sorrows may lie at the heart of him who carries a smiling face, and many a man has been an object of envy to those who look but on the surface of his state, who yet, to those who know his private griefs, appears more worthy of compassion. And sure this confused uncertain estimate of other men's afflictions may

divert us from all loud outcries of our own. Solon, seeing a friend much oppressed with grief, carried him up to a tower that overlooked the city of Athens; and shewing him all the buildings, said to him, "Consider how many sorrows have, do, and shall in future ages inhabit under all those roofs, and do not vex thyself with those inconveniences which are common to mortality, as if they were only yours." And sure it was good advice; for suffering is almost as inseparable an adjunct of our nature as dying is. Yet we do not see men very apt to embitter their whole lives by the foresight that they must die; but seeing it a thing as universal as inevitable, they are more forward to take up the epicure's resolution, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die" (1 Cor. xv. 32). And why should we not look upon afflictions also as the common lot of humanity; and as we take the advantages, so be content to bear the encumbrances of that state?

2. But besides that implicit allowance that is thus to be made for the unknown calamities of others, if we survey but those that lie open and visible to us, the most of us shall find enough to discountenance our complaints. Who is there that, when he has most studiously recollected his miseries, may not find some or other that apparently equals, if not exceeds, him? He that stomachs his own, being contemned and slighted, may see another persecuted and oppressed; he that groans under

some sharp pain, may see another afflicted with sharper; and even he that has the most acute torments in his body, may see another more sadly cruciated by the agonies of his mind. So that if we would but look about us, we should see so many foreign occasions of our pity, that we should be ashamed to confine it wholly to ourselves.

3. It will perhaps be said, that this cannot be universally true, for that there must in comparative degrees be some lowest state of misery. I grant it; but still that state consists not in such an indivisible point, that any one person can have the enclosure; or if it do, it will be so hard for any to discern who that one person is, that I need desire no fairer a composition, than to have every man suspend his repinings till he can evince his title. But, alas, there are but few that can make any approaches to such a pretence; for though, if we advert to men's complaints, we should think all degrees of comparison were confounded, and every man were equally the greatest sufferer, yet certainly, in the truth of things, it is nothing so; for (not to repeat what was before mentioned, that probably no man is miserable in any proportion to the utmost degree of possibility,) the remarkably unhappy are very far the less number. And how passionately soever men exaggerate their calamities, yet perhaps in their sober mood they will scarce change states with those whom they profess to think more happy than themselves. It was the saying of Socrates, that if there

were a common bank made of all men's troubles, most men would rather choose to take those they brought, than to venture upon a new dividend. And, indeed, he had reason for his supposition ; for, considering how great a part of many men's afflictions are of their own making, fictitious and imaginary, they may justly fear lest they should exchange feathers for lead, their own empty shadows for the real and pressing calamities of others ; and cannot but think it best to sit down with their own, which serve their declamations as well, and their ease much better. We oft see men, at a little misshaping of a garment, a scarce-discernible error in their cook, or the shortest interruption in their sports, in such transports of trouble, as if they were the most unfortunate men in the world ; yet for all that, you shall hardly persuade them to change with him whose coarse clothing supersedes all care of the fashion, whose appetite was never disappointed for want of sauce, and whose perpetual toil makes him insensible what the defeat of sport signifies.

4. Nay, even where the exchange seems more equal, where the afflictions are on both sides solid and substantial, yet a prudent man would scarce venture upon the barter. It is no small advantage to know what we have to contest with, to have experimented the worst of its attacks, by which we become better able to guard ourselves ; but a new evil comes with the force of a surprise, and finds us open and disarmed. It is, indeed, almost a

miraculous power that custom has in reconciling us to things otherwise displeasing: all our senses are taught to remit of their aversion by familiarity with ungrateful objects; that ugly form which at first makes us start, by use divests its terror; and we reconcile ourselves to harsh sounds and ill relishes by long custom. And sure it has the very same effect upon our minds: the most fierce calamities do by acquaintance grow more tractable; so that he that exchanges an old one for a new does but bring a wild lion into his house instead of a tame; it may, for aught he knows, immediately tear him to pieces, but at least must cost him a great deal of pains to render it gentle and familiar; and certainly no wise man would wish to make such a bargain.

5. By all this it appears that, how extravagantly soever we aggravate our own calamities, and extenuate other men's, we dare not upon recollection stand to our own estimate; and what can be said more in prejudice of our discontent? It is a granted maxim, that every man must have afflictions: "Man that is born of a woman," says Job, "is of few days, and full of trouble" (Job xiv. 1); and we must reverse God's fundamental law, before we can hope for a total exemption. All that any man can aspire to, is to have but an equal share with others; and the generality of men have so—at least none can prove he has not so; and till he can, his murmurs will sure be very unjustifiable, especially when they

have this convincing circumstance against them, that he dares not, upon sober thoughts, change his afflictions with most of his neighbours. He is an ill member of a community who, in public assessments, would shuffle off all payments; and he is no better who, in this common tax God has laid upon our nature, is not content to bear his share.

6. And truly, would we but consider that in all our sufferings nothing befalls us but what is common to our kind, nay, which is extremely exceeded by many within the verge of our own observation, —we must be senselessly partial to be impatient. The apostle thought it a competent consolation for the first Christians that “there had no temptation befallen them but what was common to man” (1 Cor. x. 13); and we betray very extravagant opinions of ourselves if it be not so to us. Indeed, it were scarce possible for us to be so unsatisfied as the greatest part of us are, did we, in the comparing ourselves with others, proceed with any tolerable ingenuity.

7. But, alas, we are very fallacious and deceitful in the point; we do not compare the good of others with our good, nor their evil with our evil; but with an envious curiosity we amass together all the desirable circumstances of our neighbour’s condition, and with as prying discontent we ransack all our grievances, and confront to them. This is so insincere a way of proceeding, as the most ordinary understanding can detect. If I should wager that my arm were longer than another man’s, and for trial

measure my arm with his finger, he must be stupidly silly that should award for me; and yet this were not a grosser cheat than that which we put upon ourselves in our comparisons with others. And it is a little strange to observe unto what various purposes we can apply this one thin piece of sophistry; for when we compare our neighbours and ourselves in point of morality, we do but reverse the fallacy, and presently make his vices as much exceed ours as our calamities did his in the other instance. They are indeed both great violences to reason and justice, yet the latter is sure the pleasanter kind of deceit. A man has some joy in thinking himself less wicked than his neighbour; but what imaginable comfort can he take in thinking himself more miserable? Certainly he that would submit to a cozenage had much better shift the scene, and think his sufferings less than they are, rather than more; for since opinion is the thing that usually sets an edge upon our calamities, it might be a profitable deceit that could steal that from us.

8. But we need not blindfold ourselves, if we would but use our eyes aright, and see things in their true shapes; and if we did thus, what a strange turn would there be in the common estimates of the world! How many of the gilded troubles of greatness, which men at a distance look on with so much admiration and desire, would then be as much condemned as now they are courted! A competency would then get the better of abundance; and the

now-envied pomp of princes, when balanced with the cares and hazards annexed, would be so far from a bait, that men, like Saul (1 Sam. x. 22), would "hide themselves" from the preferment; and he that understood the weight would rather choose to wield a flail than a sceptre; yet so childishly are we besotted with the glittering appearance of things, that we conclude Felicity must needs dwell where there is a magnificent portico; and being possessed with this fancy, we overlook her in her own humble cottages, where she would more constantly reside, if she could but find us at home; but we are commonly engaged in a rambling pursuit of her where she is seldome to be found, and in the interim miss of her at our own door.

9. Indeed, there is scarce a greater folly or unhappiness incident to man's nature than this fond admiration of other men's enjoyments, and contempt of our own. And whilst we have that humour, it will supplant not only our present, but all possibilities of our future content; for though we could draw to ourselves all those things for which we envy others, we should have no sooner made them our own than they will grow despicable and nauseous to us. This is a speculation which has been attested by innumerable experiments; there being nothing more frequent than to see men with impatient eagerness, nay, often with extreme hazards, pursue those acquisitions, which, when they have them, they are immediately sick of. There is scarce any man that

may not give himself instances of this in his own particular; and yet so fatally stupid are we, that no defeats will discipline us, or take us off from these false estimates of other men's happinesses. And truly, while we state our comparisons so unequally, they are as mischievous as the common proverb speaks them odious; but if we would begin at the right end, and look with as much compassion on the adversities of our brethren as we do with envy on their prosperities, every man would find cause to sit down contentedly with his own burden, and confess that he bears but the proportionable share of his common nature,—unless, perhaps, it be where some extraordinary demerits of his own have added to the weight; and in that case he has more reason to admire his afflictions are so few than so many. And certainly every man knows so many more ills by himself than it is possible for him to do by another, that he that really sees himself exceed others in his sufferings will find cause enough to think he does in sins also.

10. But if we stretch the comparison beyond our contemporaries, and look back to the generations of old, we shall have yet farther cause to acknowledge God's great indulgence to us. Abraham, though the friend of God, was not exempted from severe trials. He was first made to wander from his country, and betake himself to a kind of vagrant life; was a long time suspended from the blessing of his desired offspring; and when at last

his beloved Isaac was obtained, it caused a domestic jar, which he was fain to compose by the expulsion of Ishmael, though his son also. But what a contest may we think there was in his own bowels, when that rigorous task was imposed on him of sacrificing his Isaac; and though his faith gloriously triumphed over it, yet sure there could not be a greater pressure upon human nature. David, the man after God's own heart, is no less signal for his afflictions than for his piety. He was for a great while an exile from his country, and (which he most bewailed) from the sanctuary, by the persecutions of Saul; and after he was settled in that throne to which God's immediate assignation had entitled him, what a succession of calamities had he in his own family: the incestuous rape of his daughter; the retaliation of that by the unnatural murder of Amnon, and that seconded by another no less barbarous conspiracy of Absalom against himself; his expulsion from Jerusalem; the base revilings of Shimei; and, finally, the loss of that darling son in the act of his sin,—a cluster of afflictions, in comparison whereof the most of ours are but like the "gleanings," as the prophet speaks, "after the vintage is done." It were, indeed, endless to instance in all the several forefathers of our faith before Christ's incarnation. The apostle gives us a brief, but very comprehensive, compendium of their sufferings: "They had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprison-

ments; they were stoned, were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented; they wandered in deserts and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth" (Heb. xi. 36-38). And if we look on the primitive Christians, we shall see them perfectly the counterpart to them: their privileges consisted not in any immunities from calamities,—for their whole lives were scenes of sufferings. St. Paul gives us an account of his own: "In labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft: of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one; thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep, in journeyings often," &c. (2 Cor. xi. 23): and if his single hardships rose thus high, what may we think the whole sum of all his fellow-labourers' amounted to together, with that noble army of martyrs who sealed their faith with their blood, of whose sufferings ecclesiastic history gives us such astonishing relations.

11. And now, "being compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses," the apostle's inference is very irrefragable, "let us run with patience the race which is set before us" (Heb. xii. 1, 2). But yet it is more so, if we proceed on to that consideration he adjoins: "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set

before him endured the cross, despising the shame" (ver. 2). Indeed, if we contemplate him in the whole course of his life, we shall find him rightly styled by the prophet "a man of sorrows" (Is. liii. 3). And as if he had charged himself with all our griefs as well as our sins, there is scarce any human calamity which we may not find exemplified in him. Does any complain of the lowness and poverty of his condition? Alas, his whole life was a state of indigence: he was forced to be an inmate with the beasts; he lay in a stable at his birth; and after himself professes that he "had not where to lay his head" (Luke ix. 58). Is any oppressed with infamy and reproach? He may see his Saviour accused as a "glutton and a wine-bibber" (Luke vii. 34), "a blasphemer" (John x. 33), "a sorcerer" (Matt. xii. 24), "a perverter of the nation" (Luke xxiii. 2); yea, to such a sordid lowness had they sunk his repute, that a seditious thief and murderer was thought the more eligible person, "not this man, but Barabbas" (John xviii. 40); and, finally, all this scene of indignities closed with the spiteful pageantry of mockery acted by the soldiers (Matt. xxvii. 28), and the yet more barbarous insultings of priests and scribes (ver. 41). Is any man despised or deserted by his friends? He was condemned by his countrymen, thought frantic by his friends, betrayed by one of his disciples, abandoned by all, unless that one who followed him longest to renounce him the most shamefully by a

threefold abjuration ; nay, what is infinitely more than this, he seemed deserted by God also, as is witnessed by that doleful exclamation, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. xxvii. 46.) Is any dissatisfied with the hardships or laboriousness of his life? Let him remember his Saviour's was not a life of delicacy or ease; he was never entered in those academies of luxury, where men are "gorgeously apparelled and live delicately" (Luke vii. 25); but he was brought up under the mean roof of a carpenter, and consequently subjected to all the lowness of such an education. His initiation to his prophetic office was with the miraculous severity of a forty days' fast; and in his discharge of it, we find him in perpetual labours, "going about doing good" (Acts x. 38); and that not in triumph, like a prince bestowing his largesses, but in weary peregrinations, never riding but once, and that only upon a borrowed beast, and to fulfil a prophecy (Matt. xxi. 4). Does any man groan under sharp and acute pains? Let him consider what his Redeemer endured; how in his infancy, at his circumcision, he offered the first-fruits, as an earnest of that bloody vintage when "he trod the wine-press alone" (Is. lxiii. 3). Let him attend him through all the stages of his direful passion, and behold his arms pinioned with rough cords; his head smitten with a reed and torn with his crown of thorns · his back ploughed with those "long furrows" (Ps. cxxix. 3) the scourges had

made ; his macerated feeble body oppressed with the weight of his cross, and at last racked and extended on it ; his hands and feet, those nervous and consequently most sensible parts, transfixed with nails ; his whole body fastened to that accursed tree, and exposed naked to the air in a cold season ; his throat parched with thirst, and yet more afflicted with that vinegar and gall wherewith they pretended to relieve him ; and, finally, his life expiring amidst the full sense of these accurate torments. Lastly, does any man labour under the bitterest of all sorrows, importunate temptations to, or a wounded spirit for, sin ? Even here also he may find that he has a "High-priest who hath been touched with the sense of his infirmities" (Heb. iv. 15). He was violently assaulted with a succession of temptations (Matt. iv.), and we cannot doubt but Satan would on him employ the utmost of his skill. Nor was he less oppressed with the burden of sin (ours, I mean), though not his own. What may we think were his apprehensions in the garden, when he so earnestly deprecated that which was his whole errand in the world ? What a dreadful pressure was that which wrung from him that bloody sweat, and cast him into that inexplicable agony, the horror whereof was beyond the comprehensions of any but his who felt it ! And, finally, how amazing was the sense of Divine wrath, which extorted that stupendous complaint, that "strong cry" on the cross (Heb. v. 7), the sharp

accent whereof, if it do aright sound on our hearts, must certainly quite overwhelm our loudest groans! And now certainly I may say with Pilate, "*Ecce, homo*—behold, the man!" or, rather, with a more divine author, "Behold, if ever there were sorrows like unto his sorrow" (Lam. i. 12).

12. And sure it were but a reasonable inference, that which we find made by Christ himself, "if these things be done in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" (Luke xxiii. 31.) If an imputative guilt could nourish so scorching a flame, pull down so severe a wrath, what can we expect who are merely made up of combustible matter, whose proper personal sins cry for vengeance? Sure, were we to judge by human measures, we should reckon to have more than a double portion of our Saviour's sufferings entailed upon us; yet such is the efficacy of his, that they have commuted for ours, and have left us only such a share as may evidence our relation to our crucified Lord; such as may serve only for badges and cognisances to whom we retain. For, alas, let the most afflicted of us weigh our sorrows with his, how absurdly unequal will the comparison appear! And therefore, as the best expedient to baffle our mutinies, to shame us out of our repinings, let us often draw this uneven parallel, confront our petty uneasinesses with his unspeakable torments; and sure it is impossible but our admiration and gratitude must supplant our impatiences.

13. This is, indeed, the method to which the apostle directs us, "Consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be weary and faint in your minds: ye have not yet resisted unto blood" (Heb. xii. 3, 4). Was he contradicted, and shall we expect to be humoured and complied with? Did he resist to blood, and shall we think those pressures intolerable which force only a few tears from us? This is such an unmanly niceness, as utterly makes us unfit to follow the Captain of our salvation. What a soldier is he like to make that will take no share of the hazards and hardships of his general? Honest Uriah would not take the lawful solaces of his own house, upon the consideration that his "lord Joab" (though but his fellow-subject) "lay encamped in the open fields" (2 Sam. xi. 11), yea, though he was sent by him from the camp. And shall we basely forsake ours in pursuit of our ease? He is of a degenerate spirit, whom the example of his superior will not animate. Plutarch tells us, that Cato, marching through the deserts, was so distressed for water, that a small quantity was brought to him in a helmet as a great prize; which he refusing, because he could not help his soldiers to the like, they were so transported with that generosity, that it extinguished the sense of their thirst, and they were ashamed to complain of what their leader voluntarily endured for their sakes. And surely we extremely discredit

our institution, if we cannot equal their ingenuity, and follow ours with as great alacrity through all the difficulties he has traced before us and for us.

14. Nor let us think to excuse ourselves upon the impotency of our flesh, which wants the assistance which his Divinity gave him ; for that plea is superseded by the fore-mentioned examples of the saints, men of like passions with us, who not only patiently but joyfully endured all tribulations ; by which it appears it is not impossible to our nature, with those aids of grace which are common to us with them ; for certainly the difference between them and us is not so much in the degrees of the aids, as in the diligence of employing them. Let us, therefore, as the apostle advises, “ lift up the hands which hang down and the feeble knees ” (Heb. xii. 12), and with a noble emulation follow those heroic patterns they have set us. And since we see that even those favourites of heaven have smarted so severely, let us never dream of an immunity ; but whenever we find ourselves inclining to any such flattering hope, let every one of us upbraid ourselves in those terms the Jews did our Saviour, “ Art thou greater than Abraham and the prophets ? whom makest thou thyself ? ” (John viii. 53.) Nay, we may descend lower, and take in not only all the inferior saints of former times, but all those our contemporaries in sufferings, which are most within our view, and may ask the apostle’s question, “ What then, are we better than they ? ” (Rom. iii. 9.) If

we think we are, it is certain we are so much worse by that insolence; and if we confess we are not, upon what score can we pretend to be better treated? To conclude: let us not pore only upon our peculiar evils, but attentively look about us, and consider what others endure; and since in frolics we can sport ourselves with many uneasinesses for company-sake, let us not be more pusillanimous in our sober moods, but every man cheerfully take his turn in bearing the common burden of mortality, till we put off both it and its appendages together, "when this mortal shall put on immortality" (1 Cor. xv. 54).





CHAPTER X.

OF PARTICULAR AIDS FOR THE GAINING OF CONTENTMENT.

HAVING now passed through all those considerations at first proposed, I may trust the considering reader to make his own collections; yet because impatience is the vice that has been all this while arraigned, I am to foresee, if possible, that those who have the greatest degree of that may be the least willing to attend the whole process; and therefore I think it may not be amiss for their ease to suit and reduce all into some short directions and rules for the acquiring contentment.

2. The first and most fundamental is, the mortifying our pride, which as it is the seminary of most sins, so especially this of repining. Men that are highly opinioned of themselves are commonly unsatisfiable; for how well soever they are treated, they still think it short of their merits. Princes have often experimented this in those who have done them signal services; but God finds it in those who have done him none; and we expect he shall dispense to us according to those false estimates we put upon

ourselves. Therefore he that aspires to content must first take truer measures of himself, and consider that as he was nothing till God gave him a being, so all that he can produce from that being is God's by original right, and therefore can pretend to nothing of reward; so that whatever he receives is still upon the account of new bounty; and to complain that he has no more, is like the murmurs of an unthankful debtor, who would still increase those scores which he knows he can never pay.

3. In the second place, let every man consider how many blessings (notwithstanding his no claim to any) he daily enjoys, and whether those he so impatiently raves after be not much inferior to them. Nay, let him ask his own heart, whether he would quit all those he has for them he wants; and if he would not (as I suppose no man in his wits would, those wits being part of the barter), let him then judge how unreasonable his repinings are, when himself confesses he has the better part of worldly happiness, and never any man living had all.

4. In the third place, therefore, let him secure his duty of thankfulness for those good things he hath, and that will insensibly undermine his impatiences for the rest, it being impossible to be at once thankful and murmuring. To this purpose it were very well, if he would keep a solemn catalogue of all the bounties, protections, and deliverances he has received from God's hand, and every night examine what accessions that day has brought to

the sum; and he that did this would undoubtedly find so many incitations to gratitude, that all those to discontent would be stifled in the crowd. And since acknowledgment of God's mercies is all the tribute he exacts for them, we must certainly look on that as an indispensable duty; and therefore he that finds that God shortens his hand, stops the efflux of his bounty towards him, should reflect on himself, whether he be not behind in that homage by which he holds, and have not by his unthankfulness "turned away good things from him" (Jer. v. 25). And if he find it so (as who, alas, is there that may not?), he cannot, sure, for shame, complain, but must in prudence reinforce his gratitude for what is left, as the best means to recover what he has lost.

5. But his murmurs will yet be more amazingly silenced, if, in the fourth place, he compares the good things he enjoys with the ill he has done. Certainly this is a most infallible cure for our impatiences, the holiest man living being able to accuse himself of such sins as would, according to all human measures of equity, forfeit all blessings, and pull down a greater weight of judgment than the most miserable groan under. Therefore, as before I advised to keep a catalogue of benefits received, so here it would be of use to draw up one of sins committed. And, doubtless, he that confronts the one with the other, cannot but be astonished to find them both so numerous, equally wondering at God's mercy in

continuing his blessings, in despite of all his provocations, and at his own baseness in continuing his provocations, in despite of all those blessings. Indeed, it is nothing but our affected ignorance of our own demerits that makes it possible for us to repine under the severest of God's dispensations. Would we but ransack our hearts, and see all the abominations that lie there, nay, would the most of us but recollect those barefaced crimes which even the world can witness against us, we should find more than enough to balance the heaviest of our pressures. When, therefore, by our impatient strugglings, we fret and gall ourselves under our burdens, let us interrogate our souls in the words of the prophet, "Why doth a living man complain,—a man for the punishment of his sin?" Let us not spend our breath in murmurs and outcries, which will only serve to provoke more stripes; but "let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord" (Lam. iii. 39, 40); diligently seek out that accursed thing which has caused our discomfiture (Jos. vi. 18), and by the removal of that, prepare the way for the access of mercy. But, alas, how preposterous a method do we take in our afflictions! We accuse every thing but what we ought, furiously fly at all the second causes of our calamity, nay, too often at the first, by impious disputes of Providence; and in the meantime, as Job says, "the root of the matter is found in us" (Job xix. 28). We shelter and protect in our bosoms

the real author of our miseries. The true way, then, to allay the sense of our sufferings, is to sharpen that of our sins. The prodigal thought the meanest condition in his father's family a preferment, "Make me one of thy hired servants" (Luke xv. 19). And if we have his penitence, we shall have his submission also, and calmly attend God's disposals of us.

6. As every man in his affliction is to look inward on his own heart, so also upward, and consider by whose Providence all events are ordered: "Is there any evil (*i. e.* of punishment) in the city, and the Lord hath not done it?" (Amos iii. 6.) And what are we worms that we should dispute with him? Shall a man contend with his Maker? "Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth" (Isa. xlv. 9). And as his power is not to be controlled, so neither is his justice to be impeached: "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Gen. xviii. 25.) And where we can neither resist nor appeal, what have we to do but humbly to submit? Nor are we only compelled to it by necessity, but induced and invited by interest, since his dispensations are directed not barely to assert his dominion, but to evidence his paternal care over us. He discerns our needs, and accordingly applies to us. The benignity of his nature permits him not to take delight in our distresses; "he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men" (Lam. iii. 33); and therefore, whenever he administers to us a bitter cup, we may be sure the ingredients are medicinal, and such as our

infirmities require. He dares not trust our intemperate appetites with unmixed prosperities,—the lusciousness whereof, though it may please our palates, yet like St. John's book (Rev. x. 9), that honey in the mouth may prove gall in the bowels,—engender the most fatal diseases. Let us therefore, in our calamities, not consult "with flesh and blood" (Gal. i. 16), which, the more it is bemoaned, the more it complains,—but look to the hand that strikes, and assure ourselves, that the stripes are not more severe than he sees necessary in order to our good; and since they are so, they ought in reason to be our choices as well as his; and not only religion, but self-love will prompt us to say, with old Eli, "It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good" (1 Sam. iii. 18). But, alas, we do not understand what is our interest, because we do not rightly understand what we are ourselves. We consider ourselves merely in our animal being, our bodies and those sensitive faculties vested in them; and when we are invaded there, we think we are undone, though that breach be made only to relieve that diviner part within us, besieged and oppressed with the flesh about it (for so God knows it too often is); or if we do not consider it in that notion of an enemy, yet at the utmost estimate, the body is to the soul but as the garment to the body, a decent case or cover: now, what man (not stark frantic) would not rather have his clothes cut than his flesh? and then, by the rate of proportion, we

may well question our own sobriety, when we repine that our souls are secured at the cost of our bodies; and that is certainly the worst, the unkindest design that God has upon us; and our impatient resistances serve only to frustrate the kind, the medicinal part of afflictions, but will not at all rescue us from the severe. Our murmurings may ruin our souls, but will never avert any of our outward calamities.

7. A seventh help to contentment is, to have a right estimate of the world, and the common state of humanity; to consider the world but as a stage, and ourselves but as actors, and to resolve that it is very little material what part we play, so we do it well. A comedian may get as much applause by acting the slave as the conqueror, and he that acts the one to-day may to-morrow reverse the part, and personate the other. So great are the vicissitudes of the world, that there is no building any firm hopes upon it. All the certainty we have of it is, that in every condition it has its uneasinesses; so that when we court a change; we rather seek to vary than end our miseries. And certainly he that has well impressed upon his mind the vanity and vexation of the world, cannot be much surprised at any thing that befalls him in it. We expect no more of any thing but to do its kind; and we may as well be angry that we cannot bring the lions to our cribs, or fix the wind to a certain point, as that we cannot secure ourselves from dangers and disappointments

in this rough and mutable world. We are, therefore, to lay it as an infallible maxim, that in this vale of tears every man must meet with sorrows and disasters; and then sure we may take our peculiar with evenness of temper, as being but the natural consequent of our being men. And though possibly we may every one think himself to have a double portion, yet that is usually from the deceitful comparison we make of ourselves with others. We take the magnifying glasses of discontent and envy when we view our own miseries and others' felicities, but look on our enjoyments and their sufferings through the contracting optics of ingratitude and incompassion; and whilst we do thus, it is impossible but we must foment our own dissatisfactions. He that will compare to good purpose, must do it honestly and sincerely, and view his neighbour's calamities with the same attention he does his own, and his own comforts with the same he does his neighbour's; and then many of the great seeming inequalities would come pretty near a level.

8. But even where they do not, it, in the eighth place, deserves, however, to be considered, how ill-natured a thing it is for any man to think himself more miserable because another is happy; and yet this is the very thing by which alone many men have made themselves wretched; for many have created wants, merely from the envious contemplation of other men's abundance. And, indeed, there

is nothing more disingenuous, or (to go higher) more diabolical. Lucifer was happy enough in his original state; yet could not think himself so, because he was "not like the Most High" (Is. xiv. 14). And when by that insolent ambition he had forfeited bliss, it has ever since been an aggravation of his torment, that mankind is assumed to a capacity of it; and accordingly he makes it the design of his envious industry to defeat him. Now, how perfectly are the two first parts of this copy transcribed by those who first cannot be satisfied with any inferior degree of prosperity, and then whet their impatiences with other men's enjoyments of what they cannot attain? And it is much to be doubted, that they who go thus far may complete the parallel, and endeavour, when they have opportunity, to undermine that happiness they envy; therefore, since Satan is so apt to impress his whole image where he has drawn any of his lineaments, it concerns us warily to guard ourselves, and by a Christian sympathy with our brethren, "rejoice with them that do rejoice" (Rom. xii. 15); make the comfort of others an allay, not an improvement of our own miseries. Charity has a strange magnetic power, and attracts the concerns of our brethren to us; and he that has that in his breast can never want refreshment whilst any about him are happy; for by adopting their interest, he shares in their joys. Jethro, though an alien, "rejoiced for all the good God had done to Israel"

(Exod. xviii. 9); and why should not we have as sensible a concurrence with our fellow-Christians? And he that has so will still find something to balance his own sufferings.

9. Let him that aspires to contentment set bounds to his desire. It is our common fault in this affair, we usually begin at the wrong end; we "enlarge our desires as hell, and cannot be satisfied" (Hab. ii. 5), and then think God uses us ill, if he do not fill our insatiable appetites; whereas, if we would confine our expectations to those things which we need, or he has promised, there are few of us who would not find them abundantly answered. Alas, how few things are there which our nature (if not stimulated by fancy and luxury) requires! And how rare is it to find them who want those; nay, who have not many additional for delight and pleasure! And yet God's promise under the Gospel extends only to those necessaries; for where Christ assures his disciples that "these things shall be added unto them" (Matt. vi. 33), the context apparently restrains "these things" to meat, and drink, and clothing. Therefore, "take no thought for your life, what you shall eat, or what you shall drink, nor yet for the body, what you shall put on" (v. 25). Now what pretence have we to claim more than our charter gives us? God never articted with the ambitious to give him honours, with the covetous to fill his bags, or with the voluptuous to feed his luxuries. Let us,

therefore, if we expect to be satisfied, modestly confine our desires within the limits he has set us, and then every accession which he superadds will appear (what it is) a largess and bounty. But whilst our appetites are boundless, and rather stretched than filled with our acquests, what possibility is there of their satisfaction? and when we importune God for it, we do but assign him such a task the poets made a representation of their hell,—the filling a sieve with water, or the rolling a stone up a precipice.

10. A great expedient for contentment is to confine our thoughts to the present, and not to let them loose to future events. Would we but do this, we might shake off a great part of our burden; for we often heap fantastic loads upon ourselves by anxious presages of things which perhaps will never happen, and yet sink more under them than under the real weight that is actual upon us; and this is certainly one of the greatest follies imaginable; for either the evil will come, or it will not: if it will, it is, sure, no such desirable guest that we should go out to meet it,—we shall feel it time enough when it falls on us, we need not project to anticipate our sense of it; but if it will not, what extreme madness is it for a man to torment himself with that which will never be, to create engines of tortures, and by such aerial afflictions make himself as miserable as the most real ones could do! And truly this is all that we usually

get by our foresights. Prevision is one of God's attributes ; and he mocks at all our pretences to it, by a frequent defeating of all our forecasts. He does it often in our hopes ; some little cross circumstance many times demolishes those goodly machines we raise to ourselves : and he does it no less in our fears ; those ills we solemnly expected often balk us, and others from an unexpected coast suddenly invade us. And since we are so blind, so short-sighted, let us never take upon us to be scouts, to discover danger at a distance (for it is manifold odds we shall only bring home false alarms), but let us rest ourselves upon that most admirable aphorism of our blessed Lord, "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" (Matt. vi. 34) ; apply ourselves with Christian courage to bear the present, and leave God either to augment or diminish, as he sees fit, for the future. Or if we will needs be looking forward, let it be in obedience, not contradiction to our duty ; let us entertain ourselves with those futurities which we are sure are not chimeras, death and judgment, heaven and hell. The nearer we draw these things to our view, the more insensible will all intermedial objects be ; they will deceive our sense of present, and much more forestall the apprehension of future evils ; for it is our neglect of things eternal that leaves us thus at leisure for the transitory.

11. In the last place, let us in all our distresses supersede our anxieties and solitudes by that most

effectual remedy the apostle prescribes, "Is any man afflicted, let him pray" (James v. 13). And this sure is a most rational prescription; for, alas, what else can we do towards the redress of our griefs; we who are so impotent, that we have not power over the most despicable excrescence of our own body, cannot make "one hair white or black" (Matt. v. 36),—what can we do towards the new-moulding our condition, or modelling things without us? Our solitudes serve only to bind our burdens faster upon us; but this expedient of prayer will certainly relieve us. "Call upon me," says God, "in the time of trouble, and I will hear thee, and thou shalt praise me" (Ps. l. 15). Whenever, therefore, we are sinking in the floods of affliction, let us thus support ourselves by representing our wants unto our gracious Lord, cry unto him as St. Peter did, and he will take us by the hand, and, be the winds never so boisterous or contrary, preserve us from sinking (Matt. xiv. 30): the waves or billows of this troublesome world will serve but to toss us closer into his arms, who can with a word appease the roughest tempest, or rescue from it. O, let us not, then, be so unkind to ourselves as to neglect this infallible means of our deliverance, but, with the psalmist, take our refuge under the "shadow of the divine wings till the calamity be over-passed" (Ps. lvii. 1). And as this is a sure expedient in all our real important afflictions, so is it a good test by which to try what are so. We

are often peevish and disquieted at trifles, nay, we take up the quarrels of our lusts and vices, and are discontented when they want their wished supplies. Now, in either of these cases, no man that at all considers who he prays to, will dare to insert these in his prayers, it being a contempt of God to invoke him in things so slight as the one, or impious as the other: it will, therefore, be good for every man, when he goes to address for relief, to consider which of his pressures they are that are worthy of that solemn deprecation; and when he has singled those out, let him reflect, and he will find he has in that prejudged all his other discontents as frivolous or wicked; and then sure he cannot think fit to harbour them, but must for shame dismiss them, since they are such as he dares not avow to Him from whom alone he can expect relief. God always pities our real miseries, but our imaginary ones dare not demand it. Let us not, then, create such diseases to ourselves as we cannot declare to our physician; and when those are precluded, for all the rest St. Paul's recipe is a *catholicon*,⁹ "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayers and supplications, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God" (Phil. iv. 6).

⁹ *Catholicon*,—an universal medicine.



CHAPTER XI.

OF RESIGNATION.

AND now, amidst such variety of receipts, it will be hard to instance any one sort of calamity which can escape their efficacy, if they be but duly applied. But, indeed, we have generally a compendious way of frustrating all remedies by never making use of them; like fantastic patients, we are well enough content to have our disease discoursed and medicines prescribed, but when the physic comes, have still some pretence or other to protract the taking it. But I shall beseech the reader to consider, that counsels are no charms, to work without any co-operation of the concerned person; they must be adverted to, they must be pondered and considered, and finally they must be practised, or else the utmost good they can do us, is to give us a few hours' divertisement in the reading; but they do us a mischief that infinitely outweighs it, for they improve our guilts by the ineffective tender they make of rescuing us from

them, and leave us accountable, not only for the original crimes, but for our obstinate adhesion to them in spite of admonition.

2. I say this, because it is a little too notorious, that many take up books only as they do cards or dice,—as an instrument of diversion. It is a good entertainment of their curiosity to see what can be said upon any subject; and be it well or ill handled, they can please themselves equally with the ingenuity or ridiculousness of the composure; and when they have done this, they have done all they designed. This, indeed, may be tolerable in romances and play-books, but sure it ill befits divinity. And yet I fear it oftenest happens there; for in the former some do project for some trivial improvements, as the embellishing of their style, the inspiring of their fancies; and some men would scarce be able to drive their peddling trade of wit, did they not thus sweep the stage; but, alas, how many books of piety are read, of which one cannot discern the least tincture in men's conversations! which sure does in a great measure proceed from the want of a determinate design in their reading, men's practice being not apt to be less rovers than their speculation. He that takes a practical subject in hand must do it with a design to conform his practice to what he shall there be convinced to be his duty; and he that comes not with this probity of mind is not like to be much benefited by his reading.

3. But one would think this should be an un-

necessary caution at this time; for since the intent of this tract is only to shew men the way to contentment, it is to be supposed the readers will be as much in earnest as the writer can be, it being every man's proper and most important interest, the instating him in the highest and most supreme felicity that this world can admit: yet for all this fair probability, I doubt many will, in this instance, have the same indifference they have in their other spiritual concerns.

4. It is true, indeed, that a querulous repining humour is one of the most pernicious, the most ugly habits incident to mankind; but yet as deformed people are oft the most in love with themselves, so this crooked piece of our temper is of all others the most indulgent to itself. Melancholy is the most stubborn and untractable of all humours; and discontent, being the offspring of that, partakes of that inflexibility; and accordingly we see how impregnable it often is against all assaults of reason and religion too. Jonah, in a sullen mood, would justify his discontent even to God himself, and in spite of that calm reproof, "dost thou well to be angry?" (Jon. iv. 9) aver "he did well to be angry even to death." And do we not frequently see men, upon an impatience of some disappointment, grow angry even at their comforts? Their friends, their children, their meat, their drink, every thing grows nauseous to them, and, in a frantic discontent, they

often fling away those things which they most value. Besides, this peevish impatience is of so aerial a diet, that it is scarce possible to starve it. It will nourish itself with phantasms and chimeras, suborn a thousand surmises and imaginary distresses to abet its pretences; and though every one of us can remonstrate to one another the unreasonableness of this discontent, yet scarce any of us will draw the argument home, or suffer ourselves to be convinced by what we urge as irrefragable to others. Nay, farther, this humour is impatient of any diversion, loves to converse only with itself. In bodily pains, men that despair of cure are yet glad of allays and mitigations, and strive by all arts to divert and deceive the sense of their anguish; but in this disease of the mind, men cherish and improve their torment, roll and chew the bitter pill in their mouths, that they may be sure to have its utmost flavour; and by devoting all their thoughts to the subject of their grief, keep up an uninterrupted sense of it,—as if they had the same tyranny for themselves which Caligula had for others, and loved to feel themselves die. Indeed, there is not a more absurd contradiction in the world, than to hear men cry out of the weight, the intolerableness of their burden, and yet grasp it as fast as if their life were bound up in it; will not deposit it, no not for the smallest breathing-time. A strange fascination sure, and yet so frequent, that it ought to be the fundamental

care of him that would cure men of their discontents, to bring them to a hearty willingness of being cured.

5. It may be this will look like paradox, and every man will be apt to say he wishes nothing more in earnest than to be cured of his present discontent. He that is poor would be cured by wealth, he that is low and obscure by honour and greatness; but so an hydropic (dropsical) person may say he desires to have his thirst cured by a perpetual supply of drink; yet all sober people know that that is the way only to increase it; but let the whole habit of the body be rectified, and then the thirst will cease of itself. And certainly it is the very same in the present case; no outward accessions will ever satisfy our cravings; our appetites must be tamed and reduced, and then they will never be able to raise tumults, or put us into mutiny and discontent; and he, and none but he, that submits to this method, can truly be said to desire a cure.

6. But he that thus attests the reality of his desires, and seeks contentment in its proper sphere, may surely arrive to some considerable degrees of it. We find in all ages men that only by the direction of natural light have calmed their disquiets, and reasoned themselves into contentment even under great and sensible pressures; men who, amidst the acutest torments, have still preserved a serenity of mind,

and have frustrated contempts and reproaches by disregarding them. And sure we give a very ill account of our Christianity, if we cannot do as much with it as they did without it.

7. I do not here propose such a stoical insensibility as makes no distinction of events, which, though it has been vainly pretended to by many, yet sure was never attained by any upon the strength of reasoning. Some natural dulness or casual stupefaction must concur to that; and perhaps by doing so, has had the luck to be canonised for virtue. I mean only such a superiority of mind as raises us above our sufferings, though it exempt us not from the sense of them. We cannot purpose to ourselves a higher pattern in any virtue than our blessed Lord; yet we see he not only felt that load under which he lay, but had the most pungent and quick sense of it, such as prompted those earnest deprecations: "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass;" yet all those displacements of his flesh were surmounted by the resignation of his spirit, "nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt" (Luke xxii. 42). And certainly he that, in imitation of this pattern, does, in spite of all the reluctances of his sense, thus entirely submit his will, however he may be sad, yet he is not impatient, nor is he like to be sad long; for to him that is thus resigned "light will spring up" (Ps. xcvi. 11); some good angel will be sent, like that to our Saviour, to relieve his disconsolation;

God will send either some outward allays, or give such interior comforts and supports, as shall counterpoise those afflictions he takes not off.

8. Indeed, the grand design of God in correcting us is (the same with that of a prudent parent towards his child), to break our wills. That stubborn faculty will scarce bend with easy touches, and therefore does require some force; and when by that rougher handling he has brought it to a pliantness, the work is done. It is therefore our interest to co-operate with this design, to assist as much as we are able towards the subjugating this unruly part of ourselves. This is that Sheba (2 Sam. xx. 21), the surrendering of whom is God's expectation in all the close sieges he lays to us. Let us then be so wise as, by an early resigning it, to divert his farther hostilities, and buy our peace with him.

9. And truly this is the way not only to gain peace with him, but ourselves too: it is the usurpation of our will over our reason which breeds all the confusion and tumults within our own breasts, and there is no possibility of curbing its insolence but by putting it into safe custody, committing it to Him who (as our Church teaches us) alone can order the unruly wills of sinful men. Indeed, nothing but experience can fully inform us of the serenity and calm of that soul who has resigned his will to God. All care of choosing for himself is happily superseded; he is tempted to no anxious forecasts for future events, for he knows nothing

can happen in contradiction of that supreme will in which he hath sanctuary, which will certainly choose for him with that tenderness and regard that a faithful guardian would for his pupil, an indulgent father for his child that casts itself into his arms. Certainly there is not in the world such a holy sort of artifice, so divine a charm to tie our God to us, as this of resigning ourselves to him. We find the Gibeonites, by yielding themselves vassals to the Israelites, had their whole army at their beck to rescue them in their danger (Jos. x. 6); and can we think God is less considerate of his homagers and dependents? No, certainly; his honour as well as his compassion is concerned in the relief of those who have surrendered themselves to him.

10. Farther yet: when, by resignation, we have united our wills to God, we have quite changed the scene; and we who, when our wills stood single, were liable to perpetual defeats, in this blessed combination can never be crossed. When our will is twisted and involved with God's, the same Omnipotence which backs his will does also attend ours. God's will, we are sure, admits of no control, can never be resisted; and we have the same security for ours, so long as it concurs with it. By this means all calamities are unstinged; and even those things which are most repugnant to our sensitive natures are yet very agreeable to our spirits, when we consider they are implicitly our own choice, since they are certainly His whom we have deputed to elect for

us. Indeed, there can be no face of adversity so averting and formidable, which, set in this light, will not look amiable. We see daily how many uneasinesses and prejudices men will contentedly suffer in pursuit of their wills; and if we have really espoused God's, made his will ours, we shall with as great—nay, far greater—alacrity embrace its distributions, how uneasy soever to our sense; our souls will more acquiesce in the accomplishment of the Divine will, than our flesh can reluct to oppose any severe effects of it.

11. Here, then, is that footing of firm ground, on which whosoever can stand may indeed do that which Archimedes boasted—move the whole world.¹ He may, as to himself, subvert the whole course of sublunary things, unvenom all those calamities which are to others the gall of asps, and, in a farther sense, verify that evangelical prophecy of “beating swords into ploughshares, and spears into pruning-hooks” (Is. ii. 4): the most hostile weapons, the most adverse events, shall be by him converted into instruments of fertility, shall only advance his spiritual growth.

12. And now, who can choose but confess this a much more eligible state, than to be always harassed with solitudes and cares, perpetually either fearing future defeats, or bewailing the past? And

¹ An allusion to the well-known saying of that great mathematician: “Give me a spot to stand upon, and I will move the world.”

then, what can we call it less than madness or enchantment for men to act so contrary to their own dictates, yea, to their very sense and experience, to see and acknowledge the inexplicable felicity of a resigned will, and yet perversely to hold out theirs, though they can get nothing by it but the sullen pleasure of opposing God and tormenting themselves? Let us, therefore, if not for our duty or ease, yet at least for our reputation, the asserting ourselves men of sobriety and common sense, do that which upon all these interests we are obliged; let us but give up our wills, and with them we shall certainly divest ourselves of all our fruitless anxieties, and cast our burdens upon Him who invites us to do so. He who bears all our sins will bear all our sorrows, our griefs too. If we will but be content to deposit them, he will relieve us from all those oppressing weights which make "our souls cleave to the dust" (Ps. cxix. 25), and will in exchange give us only his "light, his pleasant burden" (Matt. xi. 30). In a word, there will be no care left for us but that of keeping ourselves in a capacity of his; let us but secure our love to him, and we are ascertained that "all things shall work together for our good" (Rom. viii. 28).

To conclude, resignation and contentment are virtues not only of a near cognation and resemblance, but they are linked as the cause and the effect. Let us but make sure of resignation, and content will flow into us without our farther industry; as, on

the contrary, whilst our wills are at defiance with God's, we shall always find things at as great defiance with ours. All our subtilties or industries will never mould them to our satisfactions till we have moulded ourselves into that pliant temper that we can cordially say, "It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good" (1 Sam. iii. 18).





THE CLOSE.



HIS short institution of the Art of Contentment cannot more naturally or more desirably draw to a conclusion than in the resort we have given it, in the bosom of Divine Providence. The Roman conquerors, as the last pitch of all their triumphs, went to the Capitol and laid their garlands in the lap of Jupiter; but the Christian has an easier way to triumph, to put his crown of thorns (for that is the trophy of his victories) within the arms of his gracious God; there lodge his fears, his wants, his sorrows, and himself too, as in the best repository.

2. The Gospel-command of “not caring for the morrow” (Matt. vi. 34), and being “careful for nothing” (Phil. iv. 6), nakedly proposed, might seem the abandoning of us to all the calamities of life; but when we are directed to “cast all our care” upon a gracious and all-powerful Parent, and are assured that “he cares for us” (1 Pet. v. 7), that “though a woman may forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of

her womb, yet will he not forget" his children (Isaiah xlix. 15), this will abundantly supersede all cavil and objection. Whilst worldly men trust in an arm of flesh, lay up "treasure on earth," a prey for "rust and moth" (Matt. vi. 19), and "a torment" to themselves (James v. 3), the Christian has omnipotence for his support, and a "treasure in heaven, where no thief approaches, nor moth corrupts" (Matt. vi. 20). Whilst bold inquirers call in question God's secret will, oblige him to their sub-or supra-lapsarian schemes, their absolute or conditional decrees, their grace foreseen or predetermined; the pious man, with awful acquiescence, submits to that which is revealed, resolves for ever to obey, but never to dispute; as knowing that the beloved disciple leaned on his Master's bosom, but it is the thief's and traitor's part to go about to rifle it.

3. It is surely a modest demand in the behalf of God Almighty, that we should allow him as much privilege in his world, as every peasant claims in his cottage—to be master there, and dispose of his household as he thinks best; to "say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to his servant, Do this, and he doeth it" (Matt. viii. 9). And if he would afford him this liberty, there would be an immediate end put to all clamour and complaint.

4. We make it our daily prayer, that the "will" of God "may be done in earth as it is in heaven,"

with a ready, swift, and uninterrupted constancy. As it is giant-like rebellion to set up our will against his, so is it mad perverseness to set it up against our own ; be displeased that our requests are granted, and repine that his, and therewith our will is done. It were indeed not only good manners but good policy to observe the direction of the heathen, and follow God, not prejudge his determination by ours ; but in a modest suspension of our thoughts, "hearken what the Lord God will say concerning us, for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints, that they turn not again" (Ps. lxxxv. 8).

5. Or, however, upon surprise, we may indulge a passionate affection, and dote upon our illegitimate offspring, our darling guilts or follies, as David did upon that child who was the price of murder and adultery ; yet when the "child is dead," it will become us to do as he did, rise from our sullen posture on the earth, and "worship in the house of the Lord" (2 Sam. xii. 20). It will behove us, as he says in another place, to "lay our hand upon our mouth, because it was his doing" (Ps. xxxix. 10) ; and with holy Job (xl. 4), when charged with his murmurings, "Behold I am vile ; what shall I answer ? Once have I spoken, but I will not answer ; yea, twice, but I will proceed no farther."

6. Socrates rightly said of contentment, opposing it to the riches of fortune and opinion, that it is the wealth of nature, for it gives every thing that we have learned to want and really need ; but re-

signation is the riches of grace, bestowing all things that a Christian not only needs but can desire, even Almighty God himself. He, indeed, as the schoolmen teach, is the objective happiness of the creature; he who is the fountain of being must be also of blessedness; and though this be only communicable to us, when we have put off that "flesh which cannot enter into the kingdom of God," and laid aside that "corruption" which cannot "inherit incorruption" (1 Cor. xv. 50), yet even in this life we may make approaches to that blessed state by acts of resignation and denial of ourselves. It was the generous saying of Socrates, being about to die, unto his friend: "O Crito, since it is the will of God, so let it be: Anytus and Melitus may kill me, but cannot hurt me." But such a resignation, as it is infinitely a greater duty to a Christian, so it is also a more firm security. In that case it is not the martyr, but Jesus of Nazareth who is thus persecuted, and he who attacks him will find "it hard to kick against the pricks" (Acts ix. 5).

7. There could not be a greater instance of the profligate sensuality of the Israelites than that they murmured for want of "leeks and onions" (Num. xi. 5), when they ate angels' food, and had bread rained down from heaven. It is impossible for the soul that is sensible of God Almighty's favour to repine at any earthly pressure: "The Lord is my shepherd," said David; "therefore can I lack nothing" (Ps. xxiii. 1). And, "thou hast put glad-

ness into my heart, more than when their corn, and wine, and oil increased" (iv. 7); and in passionate rapture he cries out, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of thee: my flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever" (Ps. lxxiii. 25). And likewise, "God is our hope and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be moved, and though the hills be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof rage and swell, and though the mountains shake at the tempest of the same. If God be in the midst of us, we shall not be removed; he will help us, and that right early" (Ps. xlv. 1). Let us, therefore, possess ourselves of this support, and, as the prophet advises, "neither fear nor be afraid" in any exigence, how great soever; but "be still and quiet, and sanctify the Lord of hosts himself, and let him be our fear, and let him be our dread (Is. viii. 12)."





p. 31.

Sophie Arlele, or the Physician of Marbeilles.

The
Physician of Marseilles,
The Revolutionists,
etc.



Four Tales from the German
of
The Baroness de la Motte Fouqué.

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Sophie Ariele;

OR,

THE PHYSICIAN OF MARSEILLES.

CHAPTER I.



WITH his books and instruments—and various chemical preparations, which could only have been explained by a few of the most learned in pharmacology—around him, sat Doctor Matthew, a famous physician of Marseilles. It was believed that he and his friend Farenberg lived in the closest spiritual connexion with each other; a constant correspondence on all subjects was kept up between them; sometimes indeed was this intercourse so astonishingly swift, that one might have almost fancied invisible messengers flew from Stockholm to Marseilles, with Faren-

B

berg's letters to Doctor Matthew, and as quickly carried back Doctor Matthew's answers to Stockholm.

When such tales as these came to his ears, Doctor Matthew would laugh heartily, and explain the extraordinary speed of their correspondence by an exact calculation of the post, which from time to time passed between him and his friend; or, if his hearers were not convinced by this, he would conclude by telling them, between jest and earnest, of a pigeon post which hastened beyond belief his intercourse with the Swedish sage; and it was not to be denied that the most beautiful pigeon through all the beautiful south of France might be seen flying in and out of Doctor Matthew's pleasant farm, which lay in the suburbs of Marseilles.

On the evening of the day on which this history begins, the learned Doctor Matthew sat alone, and seemed to have no thought but for his grave and deeply mysterious studies; even the thunder of an approaching storm, which gradually grew louder and louder, could not wake him from the reverie in which the circles, squares, and triangles, lying on the paper before him, held him, as it were, fast bound.

Nevertheless, as if this thought too formed part of his reverie, he sighed almost inaudibly, "Sophie Ariele;" and then added, smiling, or indeed almost laughing, "When I am fortunate—or, I should say, unfortunate—she comes, just at the end, and scatters all my labour to the winds; and then I have measured and calculated in vain."

In the mean time, however, he did not suffer these doubts to prevent him from diligently pursuing his work, and he looked up as though he were disagreeably disturbed, when a servant announced the arrival of a stranger, who had come to ask his medical advice. But before the message was ended every symptom of dissatisfaction that had appeared on the good man's face was checked, and his grave, noble countenance changed to an expression of cheerful kindness as he beckoned to the servant to conduct the stranger to his presence.

The tall figure of a man in a military dress, of noble bearing and youthful appearance, entered the room; and Doctor Matthew said, after the first salutations were over—"I have the honour, if I am

not mistaken, to welcome in you a Swedish officer, arrived here, as I suppose, by the advice of my friend Farenberg, of Stockholm."

"It is so, sir," returned the stranger; "I am the Swedish colonel, Gustavus Gyllenskiold, whom your friend Farenberg has sent hither, in the hope of deriving from you that assistance which the profound nature of his studies will not suffer him to confer on me immediately.

Doctor Matthew looked for some time upon his guest in thoughtful silence; at length he said, "The proposal is difficult; it sounds almost as though it were sent as a temptation. Shall I be able to render assistance where my friend has failed? And besides, your appearance, sir, gives evidence of the most blooming health. What cure is it that you require? If your truth-telling eyes and noble courtesy did not forbid the suspicion, I should say you had come here to insult me by a pretence of illness."

An expression of indignation, that he seemed to restrain with difficulty, passed over the countenance of the young stranger. The doctor good-naturedly extended his hand to him, with these words, "I would not have said so much, had I for a moment fancied it would really have affected you. My noble guest, there is only one singular little 'if' in the way; but, come, in all truth I will not grant a place in my heart for any such 'ifs' as these."

Gustavus Gyllenskiold seized the hand so kindly proffered, and the doctor added, "In what can I help you, sir? I am ready with joy to do it, to the utmost in my power. Your malady is, I doubt not, of the greatest moment; for, however many fanciful sick people may be found in the world, it is not possible for a man like yourself to suffer under the influence of unsubstantial dreams."

Then the young stranger slowly drew his hand from that of the physician, and said, shaking his head, "If you are one of those, sir, who consider dreams to be of no importance, either for good or evil, I must not reckon upon your assistance; for my malady consists entirely in evil dreams. Waking, I am healthy and well; but slumber seldom sinks upon my eyes without bringing with it the most ghastly visions, which disturb and terrify my soul. Yet, I pray you to forgive the dreamer, who has robbed you of so much of your precious time, and who can flatter himself with no hope

that you will enter into his case, or in the least participate with and help him in his sufferings. Farewell."

But Doctor Matthew, with engaging cordiality, begged his singular guest to remain, telling him that, if he could not reckon upon his assistance, he might with confidence expect his sympathy, which indeed had been already assured to him by their mutual friend, Farenberg. "Indeed, it is incomprehensible to me," he added, as Gyllenskiöld cheerfully yielded to his request, "how the philosopher, who is in general so seldom wrong, should send you to me under these circumstances; for our ideas concerning dreams are the only point at variance between us in our scientific path. For though, like him, I acknowledge many deep mysteries in nature, and look upon them both with reverence and awe, yet dreams are mysteries which I can only attribute to a physical cause; while our friend believes, not only that physical breath is often imparted to them, but that if they are not indeed to be exalted to the nature of heavenly apparitions, they are at least messengers in spiritual communications. It is possible, certainly, that he may have suddenly and completely changed his views, and has sent you to me that I may put you in the way to recovery by a different method from that formerly adopted by himself."

"Of that I have much doubt," returned Gyllenskiöld. "His injunctions respecting you were wrapped in that mystery which often accompanies his words; and I should fancy, from what you now say, that I had deceived myself by a misunderstanding, if this billet in his handwriting did not prove to us both that he has sent me to you, at Marseilles."

"Unaccountable," said the physician, after some consideration, while from the well-known characters he read over and over again the words, and at last almost spelt them: "*Cure for friend Gyllenskiöld from his evil dreams, by friend Matthew at Marseilles.*" Unaccountable!" he repeated, musing as before; "for, if my vanity induced me to believe that Farenberg had yielded to my opinion, a moment's reflection reminds me that long after your departure from Stockholm, very long after (for the posts, when properly managed, pass and repass inconceivably faster than travellers), I received a letter from him, confirming his full belief in the mystery of dreams, and promising me a fresh demonstration of the

truth of his way of thinking. And I cannot doubt, Colonel, that in alluding to this fresh instance of his theory, he spoke of you. But the principal thing now to be considered is your health. And it seems certain, at any rate, that in your particular case our friend placed some dependence upon my art for the treatment of these sort of maladies; I pray you, therefore, shew me the same confidence, and give me a clear description of your malady, and the way it came first upon you."

CHAPTER II.

GYLLENSKIOLD sat down in an arm-chair, near the physician's table, and said, after sorrowfully musing for a long time—

"How my malady first came upon me? Alas! dear sir, from the very hour that I was born. It is at any rate probable that, in the very first dreams of my childhood, the same ghastly cloud-spirit which still follows me was on the watch. Those who were then around me say, that, when an infant, I often awoke from slumber with fearful screams, and that at other times I smiled in my sleep like an angel." And, indeed, at these words sweet smiles, like those of an angel, passed over his proud features; yet soon a dark cloud of sorrow again overspread his countenance, and he said—"Whether this was pity or flattery, or a self-deception, or whether it was indeed a truth which has passed away with the happy Paradise of childhood, I know not: now—"

He stopped, and sang softly to the moving tones of an old song—

"Now is it far otherwise!"

Then he held his hand before his eyes, while he leant his elbow upon the arm of the chair, and the Doctor thought he could see soft tears stealing down the cheeks of his strange guest. But, as the physician wished on no account to disturb this fit of gentle melancholy, he avoided observing him too closely.

Suddenly Gustavus Gyllenskiold looked up proudly and steadily, and casting a piercing glance upon the physician, he said—"I am

certain you will not think so meanly of me as to believe that dreams alone, be their images ever so evil, could have power to drive me to that state of melancholy depression into which I felt myself sunk a moment ago ; but I think if my mother had died earlier, if I had never seen her glad, heavenly smiles, when I awoke to the morning sun out of dreamless, or even sweetly dreaming sleep ; or, if I had never heard her happy, hopeful words, when she said how, in time to come, she would prepare for the marriage festival of her Gustavus, or would salute him when he returned home from the field of battle as a victorious hero, or from some distant country as a noble ambassador."

Again he was silent for a few moments, and it seemed as though, with his dark glowing blue eyes, he looked sorrowfully down into the depths of his own soul ; then he said, quite collected, and in almost as indifferent a tone as though he were speaking of the unfavourable circumstances of some other person—

"In this case, sir, those fearful dreams might not have come, nor the still more fearful awaking ; for, at the *end*, when a heart of any worth becomes recognised in a half a quarter of an hour—when people *do* find a little time for sensibility, though five minutes after they have forgotten, perhaps, everything about it—Ah ! well ; the way of the world is still the way of the world ; and just contrariwise, also, a heart is still a heart. It is a painful history, too, that of the heart ; but, after a man has paid a few apprentice-fees to Sorrow, he gets to understand its course, and becomes reconciled to it. Just so it is, also, when Glory smiles sweetly and temptingly upon us, like an amorous wanton, and in those smiles lies hidden the promise—'Now I greet thee ! now I kiss thee ! Now art thou mine ! now am I thine !' And neither greeting nor kiss follows, and the promise of the glorious union only becomes a swelling poison in the veins ! Yes, yes ; the man who possesses a really superior soul submits to all this, and thinks at last — ' Let me only be laid in the grave, and beautiful golden characters be set upon my coffin or my tomb, and the long-estranged lover will then all at once become faithful, and turn and abandon my sepulchre no more ; but she will gaze, with looks of infinite tenderness, upon the breathless corpse of him

whom, in life, she dragged—by her deceitful, enticing, changeful features—through a bewildering labyrinth of error!’ And can any, from a prince to a slave, long hope for any better consolation than this, before he is shut up in his silent, narrow cabin, within six black boards, bedizened, it may be, with a few golden nails or painted characters? It were pretty much the same, indeed, whether one had performed the deeds they commemorate or not; and the shadowy forms of our great forefathers might shake their long-bearded heads at pleasure. But when one thinks how the sweet, proud hopes of a lovely mother for our worldly career have been deceived—how it is nought but sorrow, notwithstanding, which has taken possession of our heart—yes, then one might—”

He stood up full of excitement, as if suddenly a cloud-spirit had appeared to combat with him; then sitting calmly down again upon his arm-chair, he said, smiling and making a gentle movement with his hand, to prevent the soothing answer of the physician, “Let them alone, good sir, I have comfort for such griefs as these; I know indeed that *life* is only *death*. And why should the so-called *life* so especially concern us? Have we not equally to do with the so-called *death*? The last is indeed only the culminating point of the first. It is not so much for the sake of a peaceful life as of a peaceful death that I ask for your advice in the name of your friend Farenberg. The experiment with most men is long in being made, and,” added he, in a low voice, “I suppose that few would wish it shortened. I am still young, dear sir; render therefore my lingering death as gentle as possible, while you scare away or lighten the fearful dreams of my life.”

“And these dreams,” asked the physician, who had listened eagerly, “do they always appear to you in the same form? or do they alter, according to the different dispositions of your soul?”

Gustavus answered with a smile, “He who could thus account for the various dispositions of his soul, and from their echoing tones know how to watch for the beings of the visible or invisible world, would scarcely need to ask advice of any; he would himself be able to write the prescription for his cure, or, it may be, the reason why it is incurable, for indeed the die is even.”

“Hearken!” said Doctor Matthew, somewhat harshly. “My noble profession is no game at dice; and if it has any unworthy

members who consider it as such, I am not, God be thanked ! one of the number. But I know that, without the entire confidence of the patient, no physician in the world can do any good. Unquestionably, sir, you have discovered something in my appearance that has deprived me thus soon of your confidence ; for it seems you avoid unfolding to me the mystery of your dreams ; and therefore, for my part, I can only grieve that you have taken the long journey from Stockholm to Marseilles in vain."

Gustavus Gyllenskiöld rose from his seat with ill-repressed anger, and stood in the act of taking a cold, but courteous farewell. Then the door gently opened, and the graceful form of a lady with a white dove on her arm, herself as tender and as snowy white as her dove, floated in. At the unexpected sight of the stranger, a soft blush overspread her pale cheek : with unspeakable grace she bent down over the physician, and whispered a few words in his ear, then in a moment disappeared through the open door. The soothing magic that the presence of woman sheds over the too sorrowful heart of man, swelled sweetly and tenderly through the soul of the young soldier ; he already laid down again the hat that he had taken up for his departure, and said in an altered voice, " Dear sir, a little while ago I declared, in a moment of anger, that I would renounce your assistance ; and now, in just such a fit of anger, you withdraw your assistance from me. We have both been unjust towards each other ; but let me say one thing, should not the physician have more indulgence with the patient, than the patient with the physician ? And indeed the happy ought to show far more gentleness to the unhappy, than the unhappy can be expected to towards the happy."

Deeply touched, Doctor Matthew took the noble youth in his arms, and Gustavus said, " Now you have indeed unlocked my heart, and I will willingly confide to you what I myself know of my dreams."

Mutual confidence being thus restored, they both returned to their seats, and Gyllenskiöld related the following history.

CHAPTER III.

"EVEN when a boy I was pursued by dreams. Tiny forms played around me: they were infinitely smaller than I was myself at that time; yet even their dwarfish size excited in me a most peculiar dread—more horrible, perhaps, than if now a monster, gigantic as the tower of yon cathedral, were to offer me combat hand to hand. Then at any rate it would be quickly decided, and in no wise an inglorious contest. But to be struck dead by mites, by ants! and it was thus that the visions of my dreams appeared before me. Little men, only a finger long, with sharp needles for swords, fiercely enraged one against the other, and all together against the world, but particularly against me. How often, when my tender mother laid me in my bed, and saw my infant limbs tremble, or my cheeks grow pale, how often did she say, 'Oh, Gustavus—my own child!—what ails thee? Let me only know what gives thee pain, and surely, with God's assistance, I would chase it from thy dear, tender soul!' But it seemed to me then that my lips were sealed; I did nothing but sigh deeply in my heart, and think—'Ah, if you only knew about the wicked little wizards! But what then? They would not be so obedient to you as your poor Gustavus, and you would not be able to preserve him from them. Much better is it therefore that you should know and understand nothing at all about them?'—So I kept the secret from my dear mother until she died; when even then I strove to tell her of it in my childish lamentations, the little wizards disappeared, and I thought that perhaps their evil forms would come more seldom. But it turned out far otherwise; they came only more often, and wore a more fearful appearance than ever. By little and little, out of the dark world of dreams, forms rose up"—

He stopped, and, with his eyes half closed, mused for a long time, shuddering as if he could find no words to express the horror in his bosom. At last he continued in a hoarse voice, speaking almost like a frenzied man—"Doctor Matthew, have you ever read the 'Germania' of Tacitus? But what do I say? so learned a man, and not acquainted with the 'Germania' of Tacitus! Well,

you must have read there—‘There shall arise at various times from the waves of the north-eastern ocean strange, brilliant forms—beautiful, but absolutely fearful on account of their marvelously solemn beauty!’ That was the idea, at least, which always came to my mind when I read that enigmatical passage. And when, as a schoolboy, I had to explain the description of it, I was blamed because I put my own fearful meaning upon it; yet it seemed to me that I could have explained my dreams, as they increased upon me, in the enigmatical words of the old Roman. Even to you, dear sir, I can scarcely describe them more clearly.—Will you have patience with me?”

The physician begged he would desist from the explanation that seemed so singularly painful to him, and to wait for some more favourable moment. But Gyllenskiöld quickly composed himself, and said with a forced smile, “He would indeed be a brave soldier who must wait for the right hour before he can face the enemy! No, forwards! From the misty world of dreams there arise kings’ heads with long grey beards, and maidens with such wondrously bright forms, that my closed eyes are often pained at their exceeding brightness. These might be called beautiful; but such a strange expression of scorn plays around their sharply curved coral lips, and their eyes sparkle sometimes with such triumphant hatred, that a deep, inexpressible horror fills my whole soul. And then they sing so wildly and fearfully; and it seems, ever and anon, as though I understand their words, and yet I understand them not; while, from musing perpetually on the meaning, which at one time seems plain, and at another eludes my grasp, my brain becomes perfectly dizzy. The old crowned heroes shake their white heads disapprovingly, as though in anger; and the women grow pale, as if with fear, and distort their livid, hideous features; and then all of a sudden they are changed to the white crowned heads, and the old heroes to the horrible blooming women. Then they all quarrel, and pursue each other with mad eagerness; then arise such wild dancing and chasing, and at last they fall to the earth, misshapen, disfigured corpses; and all around, in the air, is heard a most fearful chorus—‘*Life is death!*’—and involuntarily I sing with them, and my own voice swells with the dull sounds of the dream, louder and louder, till at

last, terrified, I awake; but the ghastly sound pursues me: '*Life is death!*' and the earth seems to me dark and dead, and the light of the sun changes into a grey mist; and rejoicings and festivals are nought but sorrow for me, and the noon-day is changed into midnight."

CHAPTER IV.

GUSTAVUS GYLLENSKIOLD leaned back in the arm-chair, pale as a wounded soldier after a hard-fought battle.

Doctor Matthew looked at him thoughtfully, deeply pondering over what he had heard, and considering it according to the rules of his healing art; he turned one attentive look on Gyllenskiold, asked him a few hasty searching questions, then moved his chair to the table to write some prescriptions and receipts of a simple kind, but still more to think over and judge of what he had heard, and note down a general view of the state of the sufferer, and the changing expression of his face.

Meanwhile a soft slumber stole insensibly over the eyes and soul of the exhausted youth. But while he slept his wild fearful dreams rose not up before him. It seemed to him as though he stood upon the top of an exceeding high mountain, and had never before breathed or felt such pure, reanimating air. It poured through all his veins like a healing torrent, and overflowed his whole frame, when gently his heart ceased to beat, and a sweet voice sang:—

"How beautiful is death,
When in pure light we die!
Not fearful is the parting breath,
It is but sleep in which we lie:
Death is not night,
But pure and glorious light."

Wondering, he looked behind him to the place from whence the singing came, and near him he saw a white dove, that silently and sweetly looked on him with its thoughtful eyes.

"Do the doves sing upon the lofty mountains of the south?" he

asked. Then he heard a pleasant voice whisper, "No, not yet!" and a low, gentle laugh.

But this was no dream. He had awaked long ago; and looking up, he saw indeed the white dove, but upon the shoulder of the same fair, tender lady, whose lovely appearance had before checked the rising quarrel between him and the physician. She held in her white hand some sheets of paper, which she laughingly tore in pieces and let fly out of the window, amusing herself with watching the white fragments borne hither and thither by the evening wind, and then sinking down into the darkening surface of the neighbouring sea.

Doctor Matthew looked at her in astonishment; still holding the pen in his right hand. These little loose fragments were all that remained of the description he had just finished of Gyllenskiöld's morbid world of dreams. The graceful vision murmured still more clearly, "No, not yet;" and she added, as she stooped down and kissed his brow, "but how could you undertake anything without consulting me?" Then, for the first time noticing that Gyllenskiöld had awaked, with a swift step she glided out of the room.

CHAPTER V.

"A STRANGE series of circumstances," said the physician, after some moments' pause, "compels me, Colonel Gyllenskiöld, to let you have some deeper and earlier insight into the history of my life, than might seem advisable between prudent men on so short an acquaintance; but it will be no painful task to me to show this confidence to one of your noble and courteous demeanour. And, besides, we are already bound closely to each other by our mutual love and respect for the wise and learned Farenberg. Listen then, in order that you may not take me for a weak-hearted fool, who is ready every moment to sacrifice his views of life and skill to the caprices of a beautiful woman."

Gyllenskiöld pressed the hand of the physician; grateful for his frank and noble confidence, and it seemed to him as though a sweetly sounding stream of air, like the murmuring of bees, breathed

through the apartment. Doctor Matthew also must have perceived it, for a smile of pleasure passed over his countenance, while he softly, almost imperceptibly, shook his head. Then he said—

“It is now almost six years ago since I made a botanical expedition over the chain of mountains which separate Genoa from the plains of Lombardy; and one beautiful spring evening, I found myself at so great a height that I was as it were quite alone in the world, and that everything around me had disappeared from view amid shapeless clouds. The mountain summit on which I stood rose up into the sunny blue air from the sea of mist at my feet, like some lonely island. Mountain herbs filled the air with the most delicious odour, and the most exquisite moss grew under my feet, giving me thus as sweet an enjoyment of nature as can be found in this wide, beautiful world. But every trace of the footpath had now disappeared, and half fearing, half smiling, I thought of the haughty physician, who, in a sumptuous feast, was placed by the jesting tyrant at a separate table, and entertained only with perfumes, that he might be satisfied with Olympic fare. While I was looking for a path by which I might easily descend, I beheld in the surface of the sea of mist my own reflection, pale, stiff, and distorted. Horror and giddiness seized me; I felt myself precipitated into some unknown abyss, and became insensible as I fell. When I again recovered my senses, I found myself in a shepherd’s cottage stretched upon a soft bed of moss. In my head and breast I felt severe pain; but, notwithstanding, an unspeakably sweet feeling, as of ethereal balm, floated around me, and filled my whole soul. I believed that it was the sensation that followed a happy death, and thought a fair, tender woman’s form at my side was an angel guiding me home. And oh, my friend! though since that wondrous moment I have led a happy and, in comparison with other men, a blissful life, and have seen, God be praised! manifold joys spring up before me on my earthly path, yet the glorious feeling of that moment sometimes makes me wish that it had been my last, and that I had been conducted, as I then believed, to the eternal joys of Paradise. But I again sank back into a gentle insensibility. When I recovered, the beautiful vision had disappeared. A grey-headed shepherd, with a benevolent countenance, stood by my bed, saying, ‘Take comfort, my dear sir;

you will not die.' Knowledge and experience, however simply acquired, I never despised ; but with my returning senses, awoke also within me a sort of medical pride, and I answered the good old man, ' Do you know that? and who has told you ? ' ' The lady Ariele herself ' he said, in a tone of confidence, that seemed to put every doubt of recovery out of the question ; and so indeed did it seem to me. ' The lady Ariele herself ? ' I repeated, as if responding to his words. ' Yes—yes ! ' And in my heart I knew full well that she was the same fair vision that I had thought an angel, and whom my fevered brain had since represented as a being endowed with a mysterious irresistible influence, whose presence alone could infuse healing power into the expiring breath of man."

" Something like the purest and most refreshing breeze ? " asked Gyllenskiöld.

The physician answered, with some astonishment and confusion, " Exactly. But what led you to think of that strange comparison ? "

" Only," returned the other, " as we often hit upon certain thoughts without being able to give any exact account of their origin. It came to me from the dark, sweet, inexplicable sympathy of our common nature."

" Very true," said Doctor Matthew, with an expression of perfect satisfaction, " very true ; and I now feel a greater pleasure in disclosing to you the progress of my strangely happy fortunes.

" The lady Ariele lived, as I learned on the recovery of my health, in almost solitary seclusion, in the restored ruins of an old castle, which had once belonged to the noble race of Belmont. The air around this castle was very pure and delightful, but of so singular a quality that only a few of the beautiful lady's servants and attendants could stay there for a long time together ; and while those around her were obliged to leave the place, the lady herself bloomed in as perfect health as they who lived in the regions lower down in the valley. Yet attendants never failed her. Not that they considered it any sacrifice, and did it for the sake of charity ; but there was a peculiar charm, and a silent, delightful authority in her whole life and nature, wonderfully united to an almost childish gaiety, which chained every heart to her presence ; and the domestics who had left her, always returned to the castle, earnestly praying to be admitted afresh into her service. By these changes in her

household, the fame of Sophie Ariele's gentleness and goodness spread further and further through the country. And she herself often descended, like a protecting angel, to heal the sick, to cherish the wounded, and by her sweet presence to carry peace wherever discord or anger were kindled between any of the inhabitants of the deep valleys. And an instance was never known in which she had failed to reconcile them; no sick man, whose restoration she had attempted, remained unhealed. And perhaps she might have been honoured in those valleys as a saint, only that her joyousness, which sometimes burst out into laughing merriment, forbade those exceedingly solemn thoughts.

"By the gracious care of this beautiful physician I was soon so completely cured that I was able to pay a visit of thanks to her lofty castle. It is true that I felt my art as a physician to have been completely superseded, for I must acknowledge that when I became better, and endeavoured narrowly to observe Sophie's method of cure, her medicines and restoratives were for the most part quite unknown to me, or seemed completely unimportant and almost childish. Yet I knew, from experience, that I could never have restored a person so severely wounded, in the short time that Sophie had required to complete my cure.

"Light as a chamois, and happy as a lark in spring, I climbed the mountain path to Ariele's castle, in order to thank my mysterious preserver. You ask what I found there? Spare me, my friend, the task of describing the capricious strangeness of this almost aëriel dwelling; or—for I feel that you would wish to know more concerning it—spare me at least at present. At another time our conversations may lead us back to this subject, when I will gratify your curiosity. Sophie was not, as I had at first supposed, one of those strange learned Italians who had obtained a degree in medicine for their skill and knowledge. No one was further than Sophie Ariele from possessing academic knowledge. But her mind is tuned in such sweet and innocently deep accord with all things with which she is acquainted, as it were without art or learning, that she floats above all my science like a glittering breath of air playing upon the waves and circles of the sea. It is true she acknowledges that justice and goodness are often to be found in my manner of thinking and acting; but it frequently happens, as it did just now, that she

laughs at my prescriptions and receipts, or whatever notes of the kind I have prepared—tears them to pieces, as a child would a daisy, and gives them as a sport to the winds. But in all the various cases in which experience has taught me that my lovely wife possesses a true judgment, in its highest and noblest form, I have never met with one that appeared to me so singular as your own. Indeed, sir, I now hope, with the utmost confidence, to be able very soon to banish your fearful dreams; and to rejoice our friend Farenberg with a favourable account of the issue of your journey to Marseilles.”

CHAPTER VI.

DOCTOR MATTHEW now invited his patient to their evening meal, that was awaiting them in the garden by the sea shore; and they went out together. More balmy than usual, after the thunder and lightning of a distant storm that had just passed away, the blossoms and flowers of the herbs breathed fragrance from the beds where they grew, partly in beautiful order, partly in capricious confusion, throughout the green plantation.

“It is Sophie’s work,” said the doctor, smiling, while Gyllenskiöld with pleased astonishment followed him through the shaded walks which wound between the various trees, forming little bowers in the shrubberies as they passed along, and displaying every now and then to the view a transient prospect of the beautifully swelling sea.

The physician, with the sweet feelings that now breathed through his soul, beholding the grave smiles of Gustavus as a bright mirror of his own thoughts, softly said—

“One evening, as I stood upon the walls of Ariele’s mountain castle, and looked with her at the setting of the evening sun, and the veil of mist which gradually sank over the deep valleys, the feeling at that sweet hour stole over my heart, that she indeed was the soul of my life; and a supplication for her pure love breathing from my lips was answered by a softly whispered yes. At this moment it seemed to me that upon these happy mountains my earthly

destiny was fulfilled. I spoke, as a matter of course, of the future that I was to spend henceforth in the distant castle. But she looked at me in astonishment, and a light shade of displeasure passed over her features, as on a bright summer day the shadow of a cloud sometimes passes over the flowery meadows. She chid me gently for intending, by this seclusion, to deprive my fellow-creatures of the advantage of those faculties which God had placed in my soul, and in the art I exercised. She would go with me, assisting me by the aid of that perception which had been granted her by nature, and which, until now, she had only been able to use for the assistance of a few families of shepherds. 'But,' added she, blushing, 'supported by the arm of a protecting husband, and by his name veiled from the vain, rude glances and praises of the world, I hope to do more good than I have ever before been able to accomplish, all to the glory of the invisible Creator, and the happiness of his dear creatures.' Full of delight, I gave myself up to Sophie's sweet direction, and begged of her to consider whether her tender frame could for a long continuance support an atmosphere less pure and clear than that she breathed in her mountain castle. 'Take me to a city by the sea,' she answered, after some consideration, 'to the south, to a city by the sea, that overlooks the waves of the sea—the holy, wonderful, living sea. The breezes blow there as undisturbed and refreshingly as upon the top of these lofty mountains.' To me, as a physician, this opinion of her health seemed true and reasonable. And for five years, now, I have lived a most happy husband, sometimes as her scholar, sometimes also—though it is true in but few cases—as an instructor to my beautiful Sophie Ariele."

"Sophie Ariele!" repeated Gyllenskiöld, after a sweet, dream-like fit of musing, "Sophie Ariele! How graceful the name sounds! And is this beautiful creature, that almost seems wafted to you from heaven, without either friends or kindred? And is Ariele her second Christian name—or the name of her race?"

"On this subject," said the physician, with an open-hearted smile, "I can give you no other account than one which will seem to you almost childish. Sophie was separated from her parents, under peculiar circumstances, in her early childhood. All that she can recall of her relations carries with it the ideas connected with

her infancy, as it was only as a child that she remembers them. She laughs sometimes at her own history; yet more often, the tears drop from her blue, angelic eyes, when she recalls—though the remembrance is now only indistinct—the harsh and cruel separation. I entreat you, therefore, my noble guest, disturb not the serenity of that blue heaven by any allusion to Sophie Ariele's birth."

Blushing, from a slight feeling of displeasure, Gyllenskiöld said—"I hope that I have not behaved to my noble host with such rude or uncourteous manners, that he could be justified in fearing from me an error against all rules of courtesy. Is it probable that at our first meeting I should inquire of a noble lady of her origin, and her early relations?"

"But let me hope," answered the physician soothingly, "that we shall see you often at our house; and it was only in consideration of this, that"—

"That you find it necessary to warn me against rudeness towards a noble lady," eagerly interrupted Gyllenskiöld. "This caution, Doctor Matthew, was perfectly unnecessary, for I can assure you, on my word of honour, that the gentlemen of Sweden understand quite as well the courtesy that is due to noble ladies as the most chivalrous of the knights of France."

An indignant reply rose to the lips of the physician. But at that moment soft sounds murmured through the neighbouring trees, and he laid his fingers on his mouth, while Gustavus bent in a kind of embarrassed compliance, and an angel-voice sang the following words, to the soft, irregular accompaniment of the almost motionless, but gently murmuring chords:—

"Sweet evening breezes of the sea—
Doubly sweet the thunder over—
From every flower, from every tree
Woo its sweetness, like a lover.
Hide not yourselves in vale or glen,
Or in earnest or in jest;
The storm is over: come again,
Breathe on every meadow's breast.

"Spring laid her down awhile, and slept,
And in her absence storms arose;
She has awaked—the flower that wept
Has dried its tears, and fresher blows:

Life's perfect circle does not cease,
For all is safe, till clouds are over ;
Strife unconscious turns to peace,
And life and joy are friends for ever."

CHAPTER VII.

TOWARDS the north were dark, thick forests ; towards the south the immeasurable ocean, extending free and boundless in the horizon, and blending in the already darkening evening hour with the rosy-tinted clouds of heaven. It seemed to Gyllenskiöld's ravished senses as if the world was nearly dissolved into nothingness, and yet at the same time expanded into infinity. Half-shuddering, he looked out into the undefined distance, which appeared to him the type of his own uncertain future ; so that for some minutes he forgot the presence of his noble host, and even of his beautiful hostess, softly sighing to himself, "Life is death ! and the white sails upon the dark blue surface are my fearful dreams, sorrowfully waving to and fro betwixt sleeping and waking !"

But Sophie Ariele said joyfully, in an inexpressibly melodious voice, "Life is life ; and the white sails upon the darkening waves are messengers of glorious promises, from a distant and infinitely more beautiful and blooming shore."

Gustavus Gyllenskiöld, with sweet emotion, bowed low before her graceful form : it was as though a joyous blessing had descended upon his soul from above, chasing the shadow from every gloomy thought. It was only by a strong effort, and by the assistance of his natural and high-bred courtesy, that he could suddenly fall into the easy tone of common conversation, while he implored the mistress of the place to forgive his strange and most uncourteous wonder at the astonishing beauty of everything that surrounded him.

Sophie Ariele's beautiful head shook half-disapprovingly, as a little flower trembles on its stalk before the rough blast of evening. It was evident there was something not quite right in the words of the guest ; yet with gentle compliance she continued in the

tone in which Gyllenskiöld had spoken. The three were soon sitting together, surrounded by dishes, glasses, and flowers, talking as carelessly and merrily as if they were in an elegant saloon at Paris. The words of a little French song came into Gyllenskiöld's mind, which might, perhaps, be rendered—

“ Unknown treasures, fairy pleasures,
Lavished on this world of ours ;
Joys whose home we cannot trace,
Telling of some fairer place—
Sunny hours !
Graceful, laughing, light as air,
Sunny as the sunny weather—
Without a pain, without a care—
Jest and laughter blent together.

“ Ask not why the violet blows—
Why the bloom is on the rose :
Joy will not be set to task ;
Winged, light, she roameth free.
Too curious mortal, do not ask
What or whence thy bliss may be :
The sweetest bloom upon the rose
Lies deepest in its bosom's core ;
Seek not its petals to uncloset—
Bared to the world, its charm is o'er.”

But as they thus merrily conversed together, there was suddenly heard the sound of full, rich, powerful chords, as from a solemn choir : the most exquisite harmony fell on the ear, while the melody was more felt than expressed. Gyllenskiöld perceived that it proceeded from harps that were hidden in the trees. It was, indeed, the same sound that had before, with softer breathings, accompanied Ariele's song, which now, under the influence of the rising night wind, swelled into these mighty, solemn tones. This kind of wild natural music was now so extremely uncommon, and to most people so entirely unknown, that the young Swede felt tempted to think it sorcery, or some such superhuman power. In his cradle he remembered to have heard songs and tales of the ancient heroes of his country, in which, though untouched by fingers, the harps of the Scalds breathed music from the soft breezes of the air, or from the threatening motions of the storm. Soon, therefore, this strange music became familiar to him ; only the sportive and fancies that had come into his mind so short a time be-

fore, now gave place to a far different feeling of deep joy, that was diffused through his whole soul. Gravely and silently the northman looked up to the deeply darkening clouds, and listened in joyous transport to the wonderful tones of the harps. Then Sophie Ariele whispered, in a soft voice, "On just such an evening as this I was separated from my parents." Her husband and the stranger youth gazed on her astonished; but as they listened to the vibrations of the wonderful harps, and beheld Sophie Ariele's sweet melancholy smile, they could find no words by which to change the conversation from this subject, which was so dear, and yet so full of sorrow. Dreamily smiling, she continued—"I see it still before my eyes, though the meaning of the whole has never been distinctly clear to me. My mother rocked me in a beautiful silver cradle, and prattled to me in little poems and tales, that I might not be frightened at the thunder of the mighty battle which my father and some other noble warriors were fighting, deep, deep down in the echoing valleys. The noise of the combat sometimes arose to our high mountain castle, and re-echoed from its rocky walls; then I laughed at the sweet chattering of my dear mother, and because she laid me again in my cradle (for I was too old for such a baby's bed). I could already chase the butterfly in its swift course—I could never catch it, but would sing after it wild songs, which only made it fly more rapidly than before, and the various colours of its fluttering wings glisten more brightly.

"But now the thunder of the battle rattled nearer, and the glittering of the fighting host beamed wilder. My mother anxiously called for her servants. 'They are all flown, from terror of death, noble mistress,' said, in a mournful, faltering voice, the only one of her train who remained faithful to her, and heard her. We always called this gentle creature Täublein,* because she was so soft and white and mild. I believe that, in the stammering of my earliest childhood, I had by chance first called her by this name, instead of the one that really belonged to her; and it suited her so well, that she ever afterwards retained it. But to continue. The gentle Täublein floated in, sighing, 'Ah, that I could bring an olive-branch, the glorious type of rest and peace! But all is trouble and

* Täublein is a German word, signifying *little dove*.

war; the squadrons of my noble lord yield; and fearfully sounding, the trumpet-call and arrows of the enemy threaten them with pursuit!

“‘No enemies have ever broken in hitherto,’ said my mother, with a proud smile, that fell like a sunbeam on my terrified soul; ‘and,’ continued she, ‘my noble husband and hero has built his castle so high above all the other dwellings, that no fear for me, or for his only child, might disturb his mighty battles against the fierce foe rising from the hot south. Those coward slaves have fled in foolish, needless fear, and they will soon repent of having forfeited their happy abode in this secure castle; but you, dear little creature, faithful Täublein, shall be so much the dearer to us, now you are the only one left to us. It may be that we shall enjoy a far more quiet, peaceful, and happy life when my husband goes no more down to fight in the plain. But, alas! how will he support that sad, sad peace which falls to the lot of the vanquished!’

“Then my dear mother began to weep burning tears, and at the same time my father entered the lofty room, his head sunk low upon his breast: I still see him before me. Wild as a cloud of mist in a storm, a soldier’s white mantle flew around his shoulders. The metal of his helmet or cap—for I do not rightly know what he wore upon his raven locks—strangely glistened in the brilliantly lighted saloon, outvying the brightness of the wax candles, and made me break forth into a scream of sorrow and lamentation. Then my proud father restrained his noble passion, and talked in a low voice to my beautiful mother. Few words did I catch of what they said to each other, for soon I sank into a deep, deep slumber, overcome by weariness and fear. But such words! Even now I hear them sometimes in my sorrowful dreams, full of the most desponding meaning; now threatening separation—now promising hope; now weighing down my soul into the depths of an abyss—now raising it again to the glorious heights of heaven.”

With a singular expression in her soft eye, she first looked down before her, as into her grave; then up to heaven, as towards a place in which she had already secured everlasting blessedness. Gustavus Gyllenskiöld was almost tempted to ask about these dreams: it was in dreams that all his own sorrow dwelt, and he

experienced a secret hope and a sweet delight that he had seldom felt before. Just as he was about to speak, he was stopped by a gentle sign from Sophie Ariele's sylph-like hand—a sign that seemed to say—

“ Oh, silent, silent be !
Speak not, ask not, think not :
There's music, sweeter far
Than song or voice—
Oh, silent, silent be !
Speak not, ask not, think not ;
Life's dream, life's hope, life's joy
Keep secret, hid ;
While silent, silently
Are woven unknown spells,
Unknown, but true !”

Was it that she had in reality sung these words, or had Gustavus only imagined them? For a few moments his mind hovered in the pleasing uncertainty of a beautiful dream.—But she continued:

“ When I awoke, the kind attendant Täublein was sitting on my little bed, with bright tears in her loving eyes: she told me a wonderful tale of a little princess, whose parents, living formerly in great magnificence, had wished, on the loss of their fortune, that their only daughter should remain in quiet seclusion from the evil race of men that dwelt elsewhere, and should find a recompence in the deep joy of giving and receiving love, for the lost pomp and power of her former station. And then she painted to me so beautifully the sweet joys of such a life, that I felt tears of eagerness upon my cheeks. Then my mother came in, and said, ‘Thou, thyself, art the little princess, dear Ariele; and thy wise father has destined for thee as happy a lot as Täublein has just sketched.’

“ At that time I was a more than usually thoughtless child; but the feeling that I was to be separated from my parents for ever, brought streams of tears into my eyes; and even now, when I think of it, when—”

Her bright blue eyes were filled with tears, and holding a snowy white handkerchief before her sweet child-like features, she disappeared from the bower.

CHAPTER VIII.

BOTH her companions for a long time remained silent and deeply affected, each looking down on the ground before him, sunk in earnest contemplation. After awhile, Gyllenskiöld said mildly, "I hope my noble host knows how perfectly innocent I was of giving any inducement to call forth the sorrowful recollections which the sweet lady felt in her tender heart?"

Doctor Matthew only pressed the hand of his guest in silence. But the harps in the trees sounded even more solemnly, in full-toned chords, from the rising blasts of the night-wind: their harmony seemed all at once to open the secrets of the physician's heart, and he said, "Sophie has to-day disclosed her beautiful soul and her strange recollections to you, as I have never before seen her in the presence of a stranger. Neither will I, therefore, any longer consider you a stranger, but tell you all I have ever been able to discover of her wonderful condition. In vain, since the time that Sophie bestowed on me her love, and extended to me her beautiful hand, in promise that I was her chosen husband, I have endeavoured to gain the least traces of her uncertain origin. She could tell me no more, besides what she has just related, than that her faithful attendant, whom she called Täublein, had carried her from the wonderful palace of her parents down into a lonely village, and had confided her to the care of a kind shepherd's family; rewarding the good people, for the attention they were expected to bestow upon her, with rich jewels, prepared from the most exquisite mountain crystals. But the simple shepherds understood not the value of these costly gifts, but gave them for playthings to their children; while they brought up Sophie from pure compassion for her condition, that seemed to them so helpless. But those things which men often do from charity, reward them for ever—certainly hereafter, and it may be even in this present world. In both cases did Sophie's foster-parents unquestionably find it so. Two learned mineralogists, from some distant city, sought and found hospitable protection in the shepherd's house. At this meeting—

which we might, perhaps, erroneously suppose to have come about by chance—the strangers told them of the value of their crystals, and offered, when their condition should allow them to do so, to purchase them, as their own conscience and the costliness of the jewels required. After that time, Sophie's foster-parents lived in great, and for them almost unheard-of, happiness; and they would have loved the child Ariele, who had brought such good fortune, still more deeply than before, if it had been possible. At last the two good people, almost on the same day, passed into a higher existence; and Sophie Ariele now employed her wealth in leading that benevolent life that I pictured to you before, from which I, if it may be so said, took her away, yet only in order to guide her, according to her own wish, in a still wider circle of benevolent peace and blessed performance of her duties. The happy influence over my physical trials, and my profession generally, which she has since—”

He stopped short, for now Sophie again entered the bower, the little white dove upon her shoulder; her face sweetly beaming with unruffled serenity, like the stars appearing upon the beautiful southern brow of heaven. It might almost have been doubted whether she was indeed the same person who so short a time before had been overwhelmed in so deep a sorrow. She said, with a happy, silvery laugh, “Do not believe everything, my friend, that Doctor Matthew has been pleased to tell you about his wife? for that he was talking of her I can easily perceive, by his so suddenly breaking off the conversation, and by his still embarrassed silence. Not, perhaps, that I thought such a wise head could wish to tease you with silly stories. No; Doctor Matthew imagines everything marvellous that he relates of me: I only wonder that he has never been pleased to declare that my parents are of high imperial descent; or that I am some sort of demi-goddess—and this merely because I intrude a little now and then upon the domain of his art, and am wonderfully successful in it too!”

Gyllenskiöld smiled, and was silent: he could not help thinking of what he had quite distinctly seen and heard on his awaking, namely, how Ariele had torn to pieces the prescription so carefully written by the Doctor, and let them fly out of the window—and how she had so playfully scolded her husband for having done any-

thing without consulting her. It seemed as if Sophie understood the smile of her guest. With a slight blush she said—"But there is one, of whom my good husband cannot have said enough—I mean in all that he has said in praise of that faithful servant of my parents, whom we we called Täublein. Unfortunately, I have never seen her since the day when she put me under the care of the good, kind shepherd; yet, at the sight of real doves, her pure form seems to return to me, almost as if she had been a real dove herself!" And then a soft laugh passed over Sophie's tender lips; yet soon becoming serious again, she said to the physician, "Do you not think, my love, that my frolics with the dove you are so fond of might now be of some use in helping to drive from our noble guest his unhappy dreams? for, you see, I have managed to pick up some few scraps out of your lectures—the animal vital power of an innocent animal over the sulphureous—I meant to say, over the nitrous—over the exhalation of the demoniacal natural powers, I think—" She stopped, and said, at last, half in jest, but almost weeping, "Now help me a little, when you see that I am puzzled with your learned way of talking, and in my sorrow and necessity use one word for another, or even three for one!"

Doctor Matthew said, laughing, "I have already told our new friend, dear Sophie, that you would win a doctor's hat, not in a common university, but by dint of your own peculiar faculty of science, although your beautiful name signifies as much as wisdom; but a much higher, far more infallible wisdom—" and his voice became louder as he spoke, and his eyes sparkled with a glow of inspiration—"this, Sophie Ariele, is yours, and I willingly put myself under your skilful guidance."

Ashamed, she let her soft eyes sink upon the ground; yet, when the physician, with the eager questions which the love for his mysterious profession and his vividly aroused sympathy for Gyllenskiöld inspired, began to inquire in what way the little dove would contribute to the recovery of his guest, Sophie forgot all her shy timidity. As if winged with eagerness for the health of the sufferer, she said, "My favourite dove must be near him when he slumbers: as soon as she hears him speak or sigh in his evil dreams, or moan as though in pain, then, frightened, she flutters about her wings; so he wakes, and his eyes seeing the pure white

wings as they hover around him, while he is softly fanned by their gentle motion, the demon forms of that dark world will be forgotten, and a perception as of the protecting presence of a pure angel will fall on his softened soul. Trust me and my dove: such tender inhabitants of the air are a fear and horror to night demons, as the golden breezes of the morning to bats and owls. Yes, my little dove will conquer! It lives and laughs in the noon-day sunshine; the gloomy, unsubstantial world of dreams flies far away, where only innocence, light, and joy reign!"

She repeated the last words almost singing, and immediately she took the white dove caressingly in her tender hands; then placed it upon Gustavus's shoulder, and whispered a few words, as if in command, which it was almost impossible to hear, for at that moment the harps in the trees sounded louder than ever. With a deep inward shudder, Gustavus remembered his dreaming struggles to understand the songs of those fearfully beautiful women. But here was the sweet opposite of them all: instead of the sharply glancing, mockingly laughing forms, a sweet, gentle countenance beamed on him; instead of their wild songs, breathed a mild, peaceful whisper through his inmost being. The dove, which at first had moved somewhat painfully upon his shoulder, now bent down, sweetly caressing him.

With one look at Sophie Ariele, Doctor Matthew, as became his duty as host, accompanied the poor dreamer to the bed that was carefully prepared for him.

CHAPTER IX.

A SMALL chamber, softly scented by frankincense, had been prepared for the youth. From the ceiling was suspended, by a silver chain, a beautifully shaped silver lamp; and on the side where Gylenskiöld's bed was standing, its too dazzling light was tempered by a tall shade; while in the opposite direction, where the walls were covered with green silk hangings embroidered with silver, it streamed with so much the greater brilliancy, like the light which

the full moon sheds upon a silent meadow. By the side of the pleasantly darkened couch was placed a young laurel-tree, in an elegant antique vessel : upon its branches the dove instantly alighted, soon to sink with dreamy cooing into sweet slumber. Outside the high window, that was partly open, and only defended from the air by a thin curtain, nightingales were singing upon blossoming orange-trees. One solitary picture was upon the wall, representing a group of angels as large as life, with all the sweet magic of their form and colour, watching over the sleep of the pious pilgrim and patriarch Jacob ; while the demons and wild animals of the desert flew far away, and could be dimly seen in the indistinct darkness of the back-ground.

When Gustavus had laid himself down to rest, the physician, from a crystal cup, gave him a sleeping potion, which passed through his veins pleasantly cooling, and at the same time softly glowing, and said, with a smile—" You see I would fain connect something of my profession with the cure that is to be wrought by the lady Ariele's dove ; but do not think that I meddle unbidden in her work. I prepared for you this cup with the approval of my guiding nymph ; for," added he, " though I do not by any means consider myself a Numa, yet she sometimes seems to me to be an Egeria." Then glancing at the picture of the protecting angels, he said, gravely—" May they be with you !" and left the chamber.

Full of inexpressible delight, Gustavus sank into a refreshing and, at first, perfectly dreamless slumber. Yet soon the grisly long-bearded kings' heads rose up before the tormented youth, and he groaned—" Away from me, ye threatening forefathers ! or at least, keep far away from me those woman-forms which shine with such unearthly beauty !" But these sparkling forms, with their blasting eye-balls, were just rising up out of the chaos, and Gustavus moved in fearful shuddering ; when something floated around his head like a pleasantly cooling breeze of May. Waking, he saw the dove startled from her slumber, fluttering about with extended wings. A sweet melancholy filled his heart, at the white, brightly glancing vision ; smiling, he beckoned to her, and she sank down upon the pillow of his bed, caressingly laying her white feathers on his burning cheeks, then again flew up to the laurel tree, and for a long time looked kindly at the youth from her watchful eyes, turning her graceful head from one side to the other, till at last again

in slumber, she hid it under her snowy wing. Then Gustavus also laid himself down again in soft sleep.

But after a while, the kings' heads from the world of his dreams sprang up indeed, but far, far away; looking at him more in earnest sorrow than in anger. And the other glittering forms hovered about in the horizon, but like distant stars, so small and distant did they seem. "It is the most glorious firmament that I have ever seen," said the dreamer. Then the sparkling forms floated nearer, encircling each other like wild shadowy comets, and describing wonderfully strange figures of a dance, which the youth felt himself obliged, he knew not why, to follow and define. Then the enigmatical frantic song again began to sound, and the kings' heads rose up red with passion, like flames. Yet again the dove hovered and fluttered around him; again the youth awoke, breathing deeply, and again the dove and the youth sank down to sleep. And now the dreamer saw the kings' heads and the women as in the deep slumber of death, stretched upon a wide ocean; the surface was undisturbed by the slightest breath of air, while it bore their horrible corpses as if it had been firm land. "Is this ocean then frozen?" Gyllenskiöld asked. Then the death-sleepers began to sing their old song—"Life is death," and Gustavus began involuntarily to sing with them; it is true only softly, very softly, but he knew well enough that the sound arose louder and louder from his breast; and just before he was waking in wild fear, he sighed to himself—"Oh! help me little dove! oh! wake me, little dove, thou faithful attendant!" But the little dove must have been now very fast bound in sleep, for it stirred not from the boughs of the laurel tree. Yet in the dream of the youth something floated like a dove. A white, tender creature, with butterfly wings, descended from the clouds; while, from above, a king clothed in sky-blue armour, and a queen in silvery white garments, which were set off as it were by the glowing twilight and the soft rays of the moon, looked down after it. And the hero said to the lady—"Yonder see our beloved daughter Psyche! now must she accomplish her first wandering upon earth; but animated with an inexpressibly higher love, she will again float up to us." The queen smiled approvingly, through the tears which filled her eyes, and drew again the clouds of dew like curtains before herself and her husband. The hover-

ing form sang soft tones, half like the cooing of a dove, and half like the murmuring of harps; and at her song the horrible chorus rising from the slumbering dead was hushed, and they themselves sank into the sea. But the sea had suddenly become a beautiful green meadow; the form of the lady descended upon it, and walking here and there sowed a quantity of flowers, which immediately sprang up, while the beautiful vision said—"Life is life!" Then the dreamer sang after her, with overflowing joy—

"Spring up beneath her wand,
The flowers she cherisheth;
There is a life beyond
The life that perisheth.

"Praise on her happy breath,
Wafting away all strife;
For this life is not death—
No; life indeed is life!"

He heard himself sing, and he awoke, but this time not in terror, but intense delight; drinking in the rosy tints of the young morning, and surrounded by the songs of nightingales and the harmony of Æolian harps; and near him, on the pillow, sate the white dove, joyously caressing him with her wings, and looking on him still more kindly than the evening before from the boughs of the laurel tree.

CHAPTER X.

GYLLENSKIOLD continued to live after this at the house of the physician, spending such days as those only can imagine who have passed out of fearful woe into joy, from morbid misery into sound health of body and mind. The sweet quiet which was wonderfully united in Ariele's whole nature and existence with almost childlike gaiety, filled his proud heart with the magic of an idyllic blessed peace. No earthly wish, not even the least pang from any selfish desire, once troubled the calm serenity of Gustavus's soul. He felt that there were bonds in truth

which belong infinitely more to eternity than time; and for this reason his spirit felt no more impulse after relations of this world, but flew as on the wings of the dove upwards to its heavenly habitation.

The hateful glittering women had almost entirely vanished from his dreams; the pale countenances of the old crown-bearers did indeed sometimes appear, but they were mild and kind, and in soft, indistinct whispers breathed reconciliation to the soul of the now happy youth. When once he answered in his dreams—"Yes, life is not death! yes, life is life!" the oldest of the crowned heroes approached him, rising as high as his girdle from the chaotic mist of dreamy waves, and said in a deep-toned voice, which was in harmony with the strange accompaniment of distant thunder—"Yes, life is life! but the wisdom of Asa knew a still more beautiful language which I will teach you, and which you shall demand of the beautiful elves of the air, when—" He was silent. Then the breast-wound which had given him his glorious death, a hundred years ago, suddenly reopened and covered Gyllenskiöld's garment with a deep purple like a gushing fountain; so that he said, with rejoicing spirit—"See! old ancestor, now I also glory in royal garments, now I revel in them as well as you!" But as he slept, his own voice again sounded clear and fearful, and with a scream of terror he woke from his slumber.

Doctor Matthew sate near him, and said, with a smile, shaking his head—"So, so! the Lady Sophie Ariele has again shewn herself right, and I have judged quite wrong about her infallibility—when she maintained that in the wonderful web of your dreams, among other companions you have one very self-satisfied comrade, or rather master, who may be called Pride."

With a sorrowful smile Gustavus looked up at the physician, and whispered—"What! could Sophie Ariele really think anything so ill of me?"

"It is not the worst thing that can be thought of a man," returned the physician, kindly. "Besides," he added, joking, "as to ambition, the less Lady Ariele says of that the better, since she herself inhabited so lofty a dwelling, until my love, or rather her wish to aid me in my physician's calling, enticed her down to the strand of this southern sea, and you herself may determine if she

would love the deep with so unspeakable a love did not something of the high heaven belong to it?" At the last words his voice and the expression of his noble face had again become grave.

Gyllenskiöld mused for awhile, then he said—"Why should the patient hide anything from the physician! especially from so good and kind a physician—a physician who works under Sophie Ariele's beautiful direction, and is clearly conscious of it himself? You must know, then, that ever since I first began to think, perceptions of proud magnificence have hovered round me; they floated even in the unconscious dreams of my childhood. It might have been only the silly tales of my first nurses, or deceiving elves sporting with my soul; but ever since that time I have believed myself to be the unfortunate son of royal parents, who by the contrary storms of life had been driven back into the darkness of private station; and I remember, even now, ancient tales or sayings which refer indeed to a princely, yes, regal descent of our race. I have already often related these to you and Ariele. It is true that I cannot escape from the proud images of a splendour that has passed away. When now the crowned heads in my dreams shake their grey heads so disapprovingly, I think of myself as their great great grandson, whom they blame for his inactivity and weakness, and who has done nothing to restore the past glory of his race. And indeed, my noble friend, they are not wrong, for see—"

But his proud words were silenced, for the lovely sounds of Sophie Ariele's harp murmured from the garden, and her beautiful voice accompanying it with the following song:—

"Fair children, happy dwellers
Of the palace of the air,
In the battle of existence
Conquering without strife or care;
Gambollers in the golden sunlight,
Weavers gifted with high song—
What creature you doth most resemble,
All the breathing world among?

"Every thing is like unto you,
Like in songs of happy words,
If they did but know it rightly,
Merry, merry little birds!

“ You are almost like the flowers—
 But that you your pinions raise
 Unto higher, holier bowers,
 More ærial sanctuaries.

“ They who sing the sweetest chorus
 Mount upon the highest air ;
 Mounting, singing—singing, soaring—
 Joys are round them everywhere.
 Oh ! what height has each one ventured
 Far into the skies alone !
 Aye ! what life has *he* attained to,
 Who his God has truly known !”

The last line was repeated again and again, with beautiful variations, till at last it resembled choral music, and ceased in one loud, swelling chord.

“ ‘ Who his God has truly known,’ ” said Gustavus, deeply moved, pressing the hand of his host and physician, and then adding—
 “ From henceforth the old crowned heads, with their ambitious dreams, shall no more trouble me.”

CHAPTER XI.

GUSTAVUS GYLLENSKIOLD performed what he had promised, and more too ; as it often happens with human expectations and promises, either the intention is forgotten, or else it is overstepped.

Since the morning on which Sophie Ariele had given her guest permission to relate to her something of the ancient noble ballads of his northern ancestors, he had often sunk into a gloomy silence, for he had formerly desired to be united with that glorious company of heroes. And if she looked at him with a questioning smile, he used to softly hum the words—

“ Oh ! what height has each one ventured
 Far into the skies alone !
 Aye ! what life has *he* attained to,
 Who his God has truly known !”

But one day an expression of discontent passed over the beautiful lady's countenance ; she took her harp, and struck the strings with such a firm, proud touch, you would not have believed her tender

fingers possessed so much power, and sang to a melodious air the following verses :—

- “ All things are as God has willed them
To the pure and upright mind ;
All things fair, if men fulfilled them,
Tasting of the joys they find.
- “ Take then home, sweet peace, and cherish
All the silent gifts she brings ;
Shield her, guard her, lest should perish
The fair things to which she clings.
- “ Thirst not for the fight so sorely,
All's not lost that is delayed ;
Many a noble wish is granted
While in peace our hearts are stayed.
- “ Not in vain the ancient heroes,
Clad in glory haunt your rest ;
Not in vain their breathing chorus
Stirs the life-blood in your breast.
- “ Noble deeds they come to waken,
Thoughts of old heroic days,
Every earth-born tie to slacken,
Every meaner thought to raise.
- “ Yet, poor dreamer, rest a season—
All's not lost that is delayed ;
Many a noble wish is granted
While in peace our hearts are stayed.”

“ If you would only tell me plainly what I ought to do, and what I ought not to do, kind Sophie Ariele,” said Gyllenskiöld, eagerly. But she only shook her beautiful head disapprovingly, and when he expected to receive a reproof, vanished, without one parting word, behind the sky-blue curtains of her apartment.

“ One cannot be displeased with her,” said Doctor Matthew, laughingly, as he wished his Swedish guest a good night and tranquil dreams ; at the same time begging him not to consider it an inhospitable disturbance if he was awakened early the following morning by a noise at his chamber-window. “ For,” added he, still smiling, “ it is time to expect a carrier-pigeon from Farenberg, and his winged messengers pay no respect to our sublunary circumstances. They flutter impatiently against the first window they come to, and your chamber looks towards the north.”

Gustavus took leave of his noble host, with a countenance

more smiling than the gloomy state of his mind warranted; although he would fain have concealed his trouble even from himself. Sophie's displeasure (if displeasure it might be called) threw an oppressive weight upon his whole being, for he too plainly felt that she was angry with him on account of the too-yielding submissiveness which sometimes strangely humbled his proud spirit, and with which he had already so often reproached himself. Well might the beautiful lady imagine he did not really possess any of those noble longings after high deeds which, in true men, never die; since they only showed themselves as pale, spectral images, or as phantastic, fitting meteors, which soon again yielded to the sleepy clouds of undisturbed repose. And yet he was truly conscious that the words Ariele had that morning sung were but a message, pointing out to his too rash thoughts and wild imaginations the way to peace; and, moreover, that this was only to be gained by a continual series of hard, inward struggles.

"Oh, Ariele!" he softly murmured, as he closed his eyes in sleep, "thou graceful, capricious Ariele, changing like the airy images in a stormy morning in Spring—now soft and gentle, now earnest and solemn as arrayed for some holy war; and you, ye brave hero princes of my ancestors, shall again possess your power over my soul. Ah, well; we shall see." And the proud, slumbering youth whispered the following words of a song:—

" From the golden clouds descending,
Borne upon the midnight air,
With the stormy ocean blending,
Above, below, and everywhere,
Pressing on my mind and sense
With a mighty influence,
Gleaming now, now overcast,
Comes the glory of the past."

Scarcely had sleep closed the outer world from the eyes of Gustavus, than he saw the most ancient of the kingly heroes standing by his side; the same who had talked with him of the wisdom of Asa, and had promised to teach him a more beautiful language. But this time he rose only as far as the girdle, from out of the billowy flood of cloud which was always seen in the dream. In majestic beauty the ancient hero stood before him, clad in glittering steel; the joints of his armour were adorned with golden

foliage, and the rivets with golden angel-heads ; while from the wound in his breast flowed the pure blood, encircling his cuirass as a bright purple scarf given by a beautiful lady to a noble knight as a love token of victory ; and the hero, kindly bending over his descendant, whispered to him—

“ At present you do not understand what true love is—you do not understand the word as it comes to you in the old songs from the beautiful heroic ages. Love is no selfish desire. Love is a holy remembrance. Love is the reflection of the inward heavenly life, like the bright image of the sun seen upon the surface of the tranquil waters. Love even preserves the image of *its* sun, though that sun be long set, long since veiled behind the awful shadow of the earth.”

“ How often does concealment hasten on fulfilment !” said the dreaming Gustavus.

“ Right,” answered the hero ; “ therefore life is not death, nor is life always life. But—” He seemed about to conjure up from the ever-gushing fountains of his immortal life some emblematic vision, and at the same time wore a look of almost painful compassion, as if he was fearful of frightening the poor listener with his words ; but at this moment a rustling and fluttering was heard against the window of his chamber, which drove away this prophetic dream. Full of astonishment, the youth looked about him ; but quickly remembered Doctor Matthew’s warning of the evening before. And then Sophie Ariele’s white dove, which always perched near his couch on the laurel branches, like a kind protector, flew towards her dark companion, who was beating with his wings and beak against the window, and increased his desire to get into the room. Gustavus sprang up to let in the distant traveller, when there sounded a frightful rustling of gigantic wings in the night air. The little dove might well tremble before a vulture or an eagle, and with the strength of despair he flew against the window, and shattering one of the panes to fragments fluttered into the bosom of the youth, that his little trembling heart might beat against the heart of the brave knight. Gustavus kindly caressing the little creature, discovered the letters neatly fastened beneath its wings, so that they should not hinder it in its flight, and yet be safely sheltered from the dew and rain. The dove

patiently allowed the letters to be taken from him, and then flew to the laurel branches to his white companion, where with graceful movement of their heads, they kept up an eager cooing, for they had much to say to each other. Meanwhile Gustavus examined the two letters, and recognised the hand-writing and the seal of his friend Farenberg. The one addressed to Doctor Matthew he carefully laid aside; but the other, which was directed to himself, he quickly opened, and read the following words:—

“ By the time the dove returneth
Health is almost thine again,
Cherished by a gentle being,
Whose care like soft and summer rain
On the flowers falls noiselessly,
Without harm or injury.

“ Spread not thou thy arms, embracing
The unknown, yet sweet delight :
Glowing cheeks have airy breezes—
Yet who greeteth air and light ?

“ Calm, in humble meekness follow
Wheresoe’er she guideth thee :
Be not careful to discover
What or whence her state may be.

“ Even I can scarce imagine
What her kindred, what her race ;
Yet am ever most desirous
To spy out her airy trace.

“ This beseemeth high inquirers,
Spiritual paths that tread ;
But let sweet anticipation
Satisfy thy heart instead.

“ Live and love, thy bosom keeping
Pure as spirit of a sylph ;
Struggle nobly as a hero,
Serve thy mistress, rule thyself.

“ Put the world and evil visions
Manfully beneath thy feet ;
What refreshes, and not injures,
Is in nature pure and sweet.

“ Yes, before my dove returneth,
Health, I feel, is thine again ;
Cherished by a gentle being,
Whose care as soft as summer rain
On the flowers falls noiselessly,
Without harm or injury.”

Gustavus glanced involuntarily at the two doves, as if they could help him to interpret the sense of these mysterious words; they sate upon the laurel branches cooing and caressing each other, when suddenly, with affright, they nestled together. The window clattered; a large bird of prey flew against it, either caught in the fragments of the broken glass, or filled with rash boldness from a desire after such beautiful prey. Making horrible screams he strove to get his great body into the room, when Gustavus Gylenskiöld seized his good sword and plunged it into the bold robber's heart, and it fell back silent and lifeless. The doves nestled still and peacefully together, and the youth sank back on his couch, in a sweet slumber.

CHAPTER XII.

ON the day following, Doctor Matthew might be seen walking cautiously towards the sea-shore, preceded by a Moor, in an African dress, whose bleeding brow was carefully bound up with healing bandages and balsams. At his slightest motion to leave the footpath, the Doctor threateningly raised the well-polished pistol he held in his hand. The Moor was terrified, and bowed submissively, with his hands crossed on his breast, before Doctor Matthew, who pointed in the direction in which their path lay. After walking in this strange way for some time, the Doctor said, in the *lingua Franca*, which is understood by almost all Mus-sulmen—

“Will you swear to me by your Allah, that yonder pirate ship, to whose gang you belong, will leave our coast within an hour?” The Moor nodded in affirmative. “And,” continued Doctor Matthew, “that from this hour you will injure no one on these shores, either in freedom or property?” The Moor again bowing his head, swore the fulfilment of these conditions with the most fearful and horrible oaths.

In vain he motioned to the wretched man to cease his horrible imprecations; when at last he had made an end of his fearful words, he leant against the stem of a tall poplar, to regain

his breath ; the tree seemed to shrink from his approach, and all its leaves began to tremble.

Doctor Matthew asked him angrily who had taught him to call such horrible powers to his aid. The Moor answered hastily, grinning in scorn—"You, yourself; if you wish to make quite sure of a thing, I have given you all you could desire on such occasions; and perhaps rather more, so you see I am not only an honourable merchant, but also a very liberal one. May I now be suffered to depart without danger from that little villain of a pistol you are aiming at me behind?"

"Wait!" said the physician, authoritatively; then with firm steps he approached the African, and examined with great presence of mind, and with the most gentle hand, the dressing on his bloody brow; and finding everything in right order, he said—"Now you may depart; yet for the sake of freedom, life, and health, I should counsel you to remain. Go, and think of your oath."

The liberated Moor climbed swiftly up a steep rock that overhung the sea, looking down and laughing contemptuously as soon as he was out of reach of Doctor Matthew's shot. "Yes, I will think of it. We bold sailors will raise anchor without hurting any one, in life or goods; but what happens when we come again has nothing to do with my oath."

"Perjured infidel!" exclaimed Doctor Matthew, raising his pistol to take sure aim on the black, so soon as he should again emerge from his hiding place. But the cautious Moor knew another way back to the shore, and he was not visible till he was far distant. Doctor Matthew fired after him ineffectually. He could see the black put off from shore in a well-manned boat, and joining the pirate ship about a cannon's shot off, then put to sea."

Gustavus Gyllenskiöld, who was seeking his friend and physician, heard the report of the pistol, and hastened to him, inquiring the cause of the disturbance, and of the displeasure expressed on Doctor Matthew's countenance.

"It is nothing," said he, laughing; "I have only been playing Don Quixote, and in a way perhaps more suited to an inexperienced boy than a physician more than thirty years old; listen, and you shall judge me. I rose early, in order to make some experiments in the theory of sound and echo, by firing my pistols, and went down

to the shore, in the hope of finding some object for my aim, for it seemed foolish to be carrying a weapon in my hand for no other end than to make a useless noise; and so far I was right, as the event proved; for scarcely had I arrived at a spot between the hills that was suitable for my experiment, than I saw a Moorish pirate-ship cruising along our coast, and a bandit, with a drawn sabre, sprang from the thicket upon me. I retreated from my bold antagonist through the bushes until I had loaded my pistol, then turned my face towards my enemy, and fired. The ball struck my assailant, who fell bleeding to the ground. Until then, you see, I was not to blame. I then hastened to him, raised him from the ground, and, after taking away his arms, bound up his wound to the best of my power; nor perhaps would any one condemn me for this."

"I, at least, would not, so heaven help me!" said Gustavus Gyllenskiöld, eagerly. "When an enemy lies wounded on the ground, who would do otherwise, especially if he were master of your noble art?"

"Well," continued the physician, "but then, instead of taking him to the city prison, and seeking to gain information of the whole robber crew, which might have saved many unprotected vessels from the effect of his cannon, I sought to bind a pirate by an oath, and allowed the spy to return safely to his companions. Pray, Colonel Gyllenskiöld, what do you say to this excellent policy?"

"That probably, if he had attacked me," answered Gustavus, after much consideration, "I should have dismissed him in the manner you have done."

"Do not misunderstand me," said the doctor, laughing; "this is not all—if the matter were to end here, it would be an affair of Don Quixotism merely."

"Certainly not," said Gustavus, joyfully, "and I understand the possibility of an approaching contest. Thanks to the dove-cure of your kind sylph, Sophie Arièle, I may yet take part in it."

"Sylph?" repeated the physician, laughing, and shaking his head.

"So she appears to me, both waking and dreaming," continued Gustavus; "and perhaps the extraordinary letter I have received from Farenberg has strengthened the idea; for you must know, doctor, that the dove-carrier came to me some hours ago. There is

your letter : mine I hope you will explain to me ; our friend has written to me in verse, as the Pythian sibyls of old to their votaries. But now you had better hasten, that you may give all the information you can about these robbers of Tunis, and that we may take the necessary measures for the security of the town. Perhaps my military experience and love of war may be of service to your city. We Swedes can fight as well by sea as by land."

The physician took his friend's arm, and still discussing their means of defence, they hastened over the flowery shore back to Marseilles.

CHAP. XIII.

IN the meantime Sophie Ariele was in the garden with the dark carrier-pigeon, and her own white favourite ; at the first beam of twilight they had fled through the broken window, chasing each other through the leafy branches, and as they caught each other by turns, ever and anon beginning again the joyful sport. As soon as they saw their kind mistress approaching, they alighted on her shoulders with sweet caresses. And so she passed on through the flowery glades like the spirit of morn, bearing on one shoulder the image of day, and on the other that of night ; so well the adornment of the white and dark dove suited the beautiful lady's form. Sophie knew the messenger too well not to look beneath its wing : she was surprised to find there no letter for her husband. The dove looked in her face, as though it would say—

" Yes, yes ; I brought them safely, but some one who has a right to them has taken them away."

Sophie glanced around her inquiringly ; then she saw her husband and his guest coming from the town towards the garden, engaged in earnest conversation ; they were busily discussing some subject, when Sophie's bright eyes discovered them. Sophie was amused, as we may ourselves have been, by seeing other people musing and pondering over some subject which we do not understand, and which appears to us very unimportant ; deep study and investiga-

tion formed no part of Sophie Ariele's nature. Her glance of light quickly and clearly penetrated every mystery, or passed it by as a light cloud not worth analyzing. And now the playful gambols of the two doves diverted her attention from the conversation of her husband and his guest, which was, in truth, turned exclusively upon herself.

Doctor Matthew said to Gyllenskiold, "You must read what our mysterious friend Farenberg writes to me. Your verses and my prose may throw some light on each other; read me the letter, and perhaps between us we shall discover his strange meaning."

Gustavus read aloud the following words, written in the elegant characters of the Northern magi:—

"You are a wise physician, oh, Matthew! and you are right to love a gentle Sylph, and honour her as a guide. The flame of human philosophy rises towards heaven. You are right. The recovery of our friend Gustavus can only come from some higher sphere.

"Yet I do not rightly understand why this fairy child, rich in all the delights of feminine charms, should have placed herself in your path, friend Matthew. The spirits who speak to me on the subject are Sylphs; and, of all the elemental spirits, their language is the most indistinct, though at the same time the sweetest, excepting perhaps the water-nymphs, whom Theophrastus calls Undines.

"They could give me an account of the air-sprites, or Sylphs; but they entertain some jealousy against them, and will not.

"As to fire-spirits—well, Matthew, a good physiologist like you must know that there is no sporting with Salamanders, when they are permitted to mingle in the dance with the spirits of the air. The Sylphs, to be sure, take care of themselves, and keep safely away from the noisy sons of the flame, soaring aloft with their murmuring and buzzing into a pure, crystal sphere, which is the peculiar abode of those lovely children of the air; but the Salamanders raise together a confused noise and bustle, which I cannot here clearly describe.

"The earth-spirits, or Gnomes, cannot belong to the subject of your ethereal companion and mistress, friend Matthew.

"Thus it is: although I know, in fact, next to nothing of your concerns, yet I feel impelled by an inward voice to write to you.

Look well to your sylph-like protecting spirit, for it is on the very point of vanishing from you. But there must be some wondrous circumstances attending so lovely an apparition. Who knows but her parents expect her return? Dost thou know her parents, Matthew? Perhaps thy beautiful lady will vanish just as thou art attentively reading these lines for the third or fourth time. Strengthen thyself against this blow, but remember its possibility."

It seemed at once, both to the physician and the soldier, as if they had never before read the concluding lines of the mysterious letter; and yet a painful, but cloudy, remembrance of them swept across their thoughts. Frightened, they first looked upwards, and then gazed, bewildered, around them. But there stood Sophie Ariele smiling before them, with her favourite white dove upon her arm.

CHAPTER XIV.

FROM this day, Gyllenskiöld spent much time in providing for the defence and protection of the coast, in case of the return of the African pirate ship. His name, as a bold warrior, was not unknown in these regions, though he was far from having reached that rank which his ambitious heart had long aimed at; and to himself he appeared quite a forgotten and insignificant person. But the citizens of Marseilles rejoiced to be able to gain advice for their security from the Swedish Colonel, so renowned for writings on the military art, as well as warlike achievements; and the officers of the garrison, for the most part very young, received willingly the suggestions of the friendly Northlander, so that, besides being their counsellor, he soon became the commander of their forts.

In the delights of his favourite profession, Gustavus found himself quite freed from his evil dreams; what Sophie's dove-cure had begun, or perhaps nearly finished, was quite perfected by his now constant activity both of body and mind. When, after a hard day's work, devoted to putting the batteries in a state of defence, the disposing of sentinels, or the exercise of arms with the eagerly assembled citizens and country folks, he came back towards

evening to enjoy a little quiet conversation with his noble host, and then retired to refreshing slumber, he no longer needed Ariele's white dove to be on the watch for his dreams, and to awaken him from the charmed circle of his horrible nightly visitors. If the old kings ever appeared, they were kind and mild. The old hero had never taught his descendant the language, who indeed seemed no longer to need it; for Ariele's sweet words, "Life is life," had quite perfected Gustavus's serenity, and the pure spirit of these words was often wafted in harmony to Gustavus's slumbering soul from the garden bower, where the gentle lady sate late in the evening singing to her husband. Therefore, the white dove returned to the beautiful service of its mistress; and the recovered invalid, pressed on all sides, agreed to stay at Marseilles, as the protector of their shores. For Marseilles had given him a new existence, an existence which he formerly would have considered paradise. It seemed as though he had been conducted by a series of exquisite delights to this soothing retreat.

It is possible the reader may consider these ideas of the restored patient as visionary or extravagant; his daily occupations in the fortifications, or in reviewing the young soldiers, recalled him to active life. The more he was animated by his exertions, the more light and unimportant appeared his former thoughts; and Gyllenskiöld had no time to think of Farenberg, or his enigmatical letters. The physician, too, was engrossed with the same apprehension, and the means taken to prevent the attack of the horde of robbers, which was known to be large and powerful. Sophie, meantime, showed so great an attention to the affairs of every day life; and though she sometimes had womanly fears, yet she soon recovered her calmness with such pious, trusting confidence, so like one of the graceful children of earth, that the two friends considered the mysterious hints of the northern sage as more and more improbable, and at last began to laugh together at the delusion, which before they had almost credited—that Sophie would pass away, air into air, like a dreamy cloud-image.

At last, the expectation that the Moorish robbers would attack Marseilles was given up, and the citizens felt half ashamed of having made so many preparations on account merely of the chance attack made by a pirate vessel. Yet they felt also that their pains and

trouble had not been thrown away in disciplining their young soldiers, and in the bulwarks Gyllenskiöld had erected on their shore.

Gustavus began now to talk of his journey home; he loved his father-land too dearly, not to wish to carry back to it his soul and body, now animated with renewed health and courage. His noble host honoured these feelings in him, else he would have wished still to keep him on the beautiful shore of Provence. But now the little quiet circle felt the thoughts of their approaching separation, not with deep sorrow or affliction, but with soft emotions of gentle melancholy, thinking on the blessed, blooming harvest which the sunny rays of true friendship should hereafter warm into smiling, mellowed maturity. Yet Matthew, always desirous to maintain the fresh joy of life, struggled at these times against such feelings, by suggesting some joyful or pleasant conversation.

Thus it happened, one evening, a few weeks before Gustavus's intended departure, when they two stood alone on a beautiful vine mountain; before them lay a distant prospect of the varied country, now clothed in all the gorgeous tints of autumn, and of the dark sea, whose blue waves glittered in the bright rays of the southern sun. From the happy soul of Dr. Matthew streamed a flowery vein of jests and pleasant stories. And at times Gustavus smiled, pleased at the pleasure of his friend; yet, in a thoughtful mood he gazed into the heavens above, where the light fleecy clouds were passing hither and thither across the blue firmament, sometimes blending into familiar forms, and then again separating like a peaceful flock of sheep in a pleasant pasture. But now all the clouds had united in a strange enigmatical form, like some sorrowful figure, beautiful, and deeply veiled. Gustavus suddenly interrupted his friend's playful conversation, and pointing upwards, said—

“Do you see that?”

The physician looked up, and said—“Yes, it is a beautiful cloud,” and added, laughing—“our friend Farenberg might easily fancy it a melancholy Sylph, and *demonstrate* in his own way every conceivable thing from that one sign; *imagine*, I should perhaps have said, for, in spite of all his great wisdom, his imaginative phantasies often get the upper-hand of him.”

But Gustavus answered with melancholy earnestness, for he had

with difficulty suppressed, till now, the heavy feelings of his heart—

“Oh! my noble friend, why are we so incredulous of this northern sage? why so mistrustful of his spiritual knowledge, that we should throw aside his prophetic warning only as an impossible dream? It was very natural that our warlike preparations should make us forget these mysterious suspicions, and call us out of the world of conjecture. But since every one has given up the probability or even the possibility of an approaching combat; since even my eager expectations, I might almost say my wishes, have vanished before the general opinion, the words of Farenberg’s letter have gained fresh power over my soul, and I know not whether—”

He paused, embarrassed; and the doctor laughingly continued his friend’s sentence:—

“Whether at last Madame Sophie Matthew be not really and truly a spirit of the air, though from discretion she relinquishes the title of Sylph in her signatures and presentations.”

Without sympathising in his merriment, Gustavus observed—
“Yes; what you say sounds absurd, yet I cannot quite give up the idea. Then,” he continued, with earnestness, “you have quite passed over the name of Ariele; and you, who so much delight in the works of the English Shakspeare, so little understood by most Frenchmen, you cannot have forgotten that the most charming of all sylphs conceived by poet’s fancy is called Ariel.”

Doctor Matthew appeared completely surprised, and very naturally so, for it was one of those occasions in which, by a single chance word, a long-felt and never clearly understood coincidence in the varying visions of this life is unexpectedly and at once explained.

“You are right,” said he, after some thought, “and yet I might still be inclined to laugh, that in the fanciful images of a poet you have found the clue by which I am to find out my wife’s lineage.”

But he did not laugh, and Gustavus said—

“The sages of the old world have always held the dreams of the poets as the highest wisdom; and where is true wisdom to be found, if not in the mysterious creations of the old world, from which flowed the inward and holy life of the poet in an inexhaustible stream?”

Doctor Matthew's countenance had grown grave and solemn.

"Come," said he, with emotion, "home to my quiet hearth, that Sophie's gentle behaviour may convince you and me—for I must condescend for a moment to your poetic fancies—that she is not a spirit of the air, but a heavenly child of earth, bound, as we all are, in this sublunary world, to her own sphere of existence. Come, she will scold us for keeping her waiting for supper."

With quickened steps the two friends returned home through the deepening twilight, when the astonished domestics met them with the question—

"Oh! have you not met Madame Matthew? She went to find you, to call you to supper, and she has been gone already more than an hour."

CHAPTER XV.

IT is impossible that the writer of this narrative should describe the bitter apprehension that fell, as some fearful night vision, on the soul of the physician; he seemed struck as by a thunderbolt at these words of the domestics. Still less can he relate the unspeakable anguish of both Matthew and Gyllenskiöld when they returned in the first beam of the morning twilight, after having wandered the whole night along the coast, in the vain search for one who seemed to have vanished as a thin cloud. They could say nothing with looks and words, but, "Vanished—vanished, like a pale mist."

Heaven, in mercy to the sensitive heart, stupifies it with dark uncertainty, before it undergoes the most bitter of all sorrows, the loss of some infinitely loved being. Without any accurate perception of the truth, the soul is one moment awakened to certainty, and the next tossed in all the feverish excitement of hope, while the most fearful conjectures in a confused medley pursue us, seizing us as with harpy claws.

Exhausted by his fearful woe, on the evening of the following day, Doctor Matthew fell into a feverish slumber, ever murmuring in his dreams, "Farenberg was right. Her royal relations have enticed her back to them. Air into air!" But at last, while a few

solitary tears still trickled through his closed eyelids, his sad lamentations gave way to a peaceful slumber, which pressed so heavily upon him, that he was not disturbed; when about midnight there arose a violent storm of thunder and lightning—the sea rolled mountains high, and the earth trembled and shook as before an approaching earthquake.

But this strife of nature was, to the bold-spirited Swedish youth, the trumpet-call to battle. The soldier never bears misfortune better than in that proud moment when life and death are mingled together; and if they do not offer to the poor mortal immediate repose, yet with glittering hands they hold over him beautiful laurel wreaths, beckoning, “Dare!—seize it, fear not—and it is thine!”

Hoping to be led to some glorious field of exertion, Gustavus Gyllenskiöld hurried through the terrified town. There mingled many good and noble feelings in the strong tumult of his conflicting ideas. But death would not crown his resolution, nor offer a balsam for the wound which Sophie Ariele’s loss had left in his soul.

So had he wandered till nearly morning, when kind nature soothed her afflicted child, lulling his wearied soul to rest by the soft influence of the peaceful autumn air; and though the deepest sorrow still held its power over Gustavus, yet the first feelings of his anguish were over. Under the kindly shelter which the close-matted boughs of a thicket opportunely offered, he stretched his limbs, as in preparation for a peaceful death; and sleep wound her airy net around him, bringing all that sweet delight which we might call heavenly, were not heaven rather an awaking than a slumbering.

CHAPTER XVI.

“DEATH IS LIFE!” With these words, after a short time, Gustavus awoke from sleep.

The old crowned hero had appeared to him in a gorgeous dream, opening to him the gates of a wonderfully beautiful world.

And there, with the golden rays of the morning sun streaming over him, stood the young wanderer, in all the glow of youthful beauty; he looked, as it were, like some cherub who, descending on some mighty errand, glances proudly over the earth as the momentary theatre on which his heavenly mission is to be accomplished, and already moves his invisible pinions, as if on the point of returning to his ever blooming home.

"Death is Life," repeated he, and the words came from his lips in song, and seemed accompanied in some wonderful manner by music, as Ariele's fanciful discourse formerly had mingled with the wild chorus of the Æolian harp. "Life is not Death! Oh, no—kind, graceful Ariele; thou art right—Life is Life—a sweet, innocent life—purified like thine own from the bitterness of death. Yet, when at last death approaches at the end of many, many happy years, when it comes at last serene and peaceful, for that eventful hour, O beautiful Ariele, has the old royal hero and priest of Asa, from whom I *am* descended, taught me in a hallowed dream this great truth, Death is Life! I will, I must teach it you also. Yet where, O sweet lady—Sophie Ariele—where shall I find you?"

Then the truth came before his bewildered senses, that her lovely form had disappeared from the world of reality, and his joyful serenity of soul was changed into the most poignant grief. Bewildered, he looked around him, as if in search of some magical means of opposing the arts by which he supposed Ariele had been stolen away. Something rustled over him among the boughs that were just tinged by the beams of morning; and wearied and shy, yet with kind caresses, Ariele's favourite white dove alighted on his breast, displaying a little paper fastened under her wing by a dark silk thread. With joyful feelings, Gustavus opened the artfully folded paper, and read the following words:—

"With my white dove on my still breast, I joyfully went to meet you loiterers, and dreamt a beautiful dream on a beautiful evening. The wise say that all life is only a beautiful dream, and so I have found it. Dark, fearful Moors, like demons who start from the earth to seize the spirits from some higher sphere, broke with laughter from the bushes, and seized me, and bore me to their ship, which lay at anchor in the gloomy bay. Oh! ye prudent! what was the use of all your defences, and all your exercises in bright

armour? they have stolen Ariele away from you. Yet the old reed-crowned man of the deep, called Neptune in the heathen day, has shown himself kind to me: I heard him called the father of the Undines. He raised his three-pointed spear in anger; the salt waves were agitated in storm, obliging the distressed pirate-ship to return to the shores of Provence. Exhausted by the storm, the ship and mariners rest quietly in the eastern cove. Now fight! now rescue Ariele, oh, ye brave ones! Thou, my dear husband, and thou noble Northlander, who knowest how to arrange the battle—quick! A few hours are yours for action, or you will never, never see Ariele more, until when body and soul are divided. Then fly my faithful, beloved little dove—fly, and may the spirits of air guide thee right!”

The little dove looked at Gustavus with its mild eyes, and then shook its head, as though it would ask—“Have I done right?”

“Quite right,” said Gustavus, and gravely yet gently he beckoned with his hand to the little dove to fly on to Dr. Matthew’s dwelling. After a few moments’ delay, the little creature obediently flew away to his quiet home; and the young soldier thought for an instant—“What has given me in this strange manner a power over such tender little creatures?” Yet what would have produced it but the idea of Sophie’s deliverance!

Gustavus suddenly started up, and hastened to the place where the brave young soldiers of Marseilles were accustomed to assemble, for they had not yet relinquished their favourite warlike exercises. The fearful storm of the preceding night had not kept them from their place of meeting. The youth on guard called out through the gray twilight—“Halt! who goes there?”

“War is our watchword once more!” answered Gyllenskiöld, with enthusiasm. “Glorious danger stands at the gates of the next hour, and beckons us on. What! my worthy young comrade, you glow with joy at the sound, ha? Well, well, we are in real earnest now. Sentinel! call to arms!”

With eager delight the young soldier sent forth the animating call, and in a twinkling the little phalanx stood in well-disciplined order under arms, glad to exhibit their activity to their leader and instructor, and gladdened still more as he strode to and fro along the ranks, and disclosed to them, in words short but piercing as the

lightning flashes, the splendid deed of deliverance which was before them. In modest grace and tender beauty Sophie Ariele was the jewel of all Marseilles. To bring back in triumph to her home *that* lovely lady, what young heart would not beat with joyous, ardent enthusiasm!

Attached as they were by their earliest remembrances and habits to their native spot, and relying with proud confidence upon their power to defend it, which their practice in warlike exercises had given them, the young soldiers eagerly seized upon their leader's plan of attack upon the stranded Corsair. They lost not a moment, but, silent and determined, the little army broke up into small divisions, which separated in different directions, in order to prevent the pirates from renewing the embarkation of their plunder. What were numbers to them! would not a far less number of Provençales prove victorious, when fighting in the cause of Sophie Ariele!

With the adroitness of a general, Gyllenskiöld sketched out to the dismembered little parties the plan of advance, so that the one which first fell in with the Moors might be promptly supported by the rest. If however, as might be hoped, the weary enemy carelessly allowed them to get round them, they were all to unite for a combined attack at the head of the eastern cove. The overflowing feelings of the combatants, as they pressed on their morning's march to meet the enemy, burst forth in many a martial song. To be sure, this was, properly speaking, forbidden by the necessity there was of taking their adversaries by surprise, in order that they might close in upon the line of their retreat towards the galley, and also that by finishing the contest as quickly as possible, they might expose the lovely prize to the least possible danger. But the still anxious march to the battle field has in itself its own peculiar pleasure, which may almost be compared to the mysterious delight of a Christmas-eve, and has been felt by every soul who has once experienced, in all its wonderfully mingled lights and shadows, the glorious delights of war.

CHAPTER XVII.

DOCTOR MATTHEW was at length awakened from his slumber by the firing of the not very distant battle. Neither the thunder and lightning nor the howling of the sea of the preceding night, had shaken his heavy sleep; yet was he now aroused by the cracking report of small arms, mingled now and then with the booming cannon-shot of the galley. But it is not always the loudest noise that awakens us from sleep; it is much more the interest the soul of the sleeper takes in the sound, which recalls the powers of his mind to real occurrences of this outer world. The mind of this bold and noble physician, who had formerly fought for his home and his country, was more affected by the sound of battle than by the thunder storm. Yet in his awakened soul the idea of those threatening pirates was in no way connected with the inexplicable disappearance of his sweet Ariele.

Hastily arming himself, and without allowing himself time to ask a single question, he rushed down through the trees of his garden—the laughing tokens, alas! of a happiness perhaps for ever flown!—in the direction in which the thundering roar of the battle led him, which, the nearer he approached it, seemed every instant to resound more loudly.

Uncertain which way to continue his course, he stood still at last under the thick foliage of some lovely acacia trees, and sighed from the bottom of his heart—“Oh, blessed God! show me my part also in these strange events which are going on around me; and unfold to me the terrible import of a day which has commenced so wonderfully, so fearfully, and so bloodily!”

It seemed as if his prayer had been heard, and answered in proportion both to its fervour and piety; for, on the instant, a wounded Moor tumbled from the precipice close by at his feet, madly shrieking as he fell, with his bloody sabre still fast clenched in his hand; and he bellowed once more in frantic rage; then there was a fearful rattling in his throat, and he stretched himself out, and—died.

But the little birds flew merrily over the scene of horror, sportively chasing one another, and warbling their joyous songs.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"You must cease protecting me, brave Northman!" said Sophie Ariele, when Gustavus offered her his arm to assist her descent from a hill on the beach to a green sheltered valley. "Cease!" she repeated gravely; "I, your rescued ladye, command you."

He bent low, humbly drawing back; and as if borne by invisible wings, she floated away to the fragrant turf pleasantly watered by a silver river. Then she sat almost exhausted upon a pilgrim's seat surrounded by flowers, and said, laughing—

"But, for heaven's sake, my bold knight and preserver, do tell me the reason that it seemed to you so very necessary to lead and assist me! For truly—if you will not interpret it wrong, which I am sure you cannot—it seemed to me that you are so exhausted after your exertions, that I can far better protect you, than you me."

"Very possibly!" said Gustavus, smiling; while he gently sank down into the fragrant grass at Sophie's feet.

But she said suddenly, glancing eagerly, almost sorrowfully around, "But I have lost one thing, nevertheless; my beautiful veil bleached in moonlight!"

"Bleached in moonlight?" returned Gustavus, dreamily; "oh yes, the same that the elves make in northern lands. The fearfully beautiful daughter of their monarch offered the knight Olaf such a handkerchief bleached in the moonlight, in token that he might command her hand in the marriage dance. Yet the knight Olaf remained faithful to his chosen bride, and the elf struck him, so that he died."

Sophie answered musingly—"Yes, it was so, indeed; it is an ancient, but very true story. But do not imagine that the elf was praised, or even excused by her tender kindred. To win a noble-hearted man, and by the priestly benediction, to gain with him a more beautiful, more imperishable life—ah, my friend, that is what a sylph or elf might well desire! But to destroy the chosen friend with deathly magical greetings, merely because he has not chosen us!—oh, shame, shame!"

Then she covered her pale little cheeks with her hands. But then again looking up she said, laughing—

“Where tarries Doctor Matthew, my chosen lord and husband? if he knew all, as the people say of doctors and professors, he ought also to know that his Sophie Ariele, carried away by corsairs, was rescued by a knightly soldier!”

With these words she extended her wonderfully beautiful hand to the warrior resting at her feet, adding with a sweet whisper—

“But now, I entreat you! give me back my veil dyed in moonlight. I know that you have it; I saw you tear it from the Turkish robber, when he sank down under your sword-blade.”

At this serious prayer, Gustavus looked gently at the lady with his blue, melancholy eyes, as a clear sea which brightens before the heaven looking peacefully down upon it from above, and said—

“Now all is well! till now your veil dyed in moonlight has staunched the blood from the wound which was struck by your enemy’s sword. Take it again, sweet lady. In the light of the full moon the fairies will cleanse it pure from my blood, and will make it tender and beautiful again. Oh, take it away, and hear from my dying lips the sweetest motto which now penetrates my whole existence with blessed joy: Death is Life! Oh, doubt it not, sweetest Sophie Ariele. It is certainly true!”

And, as though he would immediately seal his words by his death, he sank back on the grass, his pale face overspread with sweet smiles of joy, while with his exhausted hand he softly drew the veil from his breast, from which the purple blood was now streaming, and suffered it to gush forth at Sophie’s feet. “Death is Life!” he joyfully whispered once more. Then he lay motionless, in silent, blessed forgetfulness of all the troubles of the world.

Then Sophie Ariele again pressed the veil upon his bleeding breast, and tried to quench the blood, and let her soft tears, like drops of balsam, fall in the wound of her deliverer. But the powerless youth remained silent and pale as death. In anguish she began to look around her, whispering to the cool breezes of the valley and the sea—

“Alas! and is my art ended here? For such deathly wounds of fearful weapons, neither I nor my poor little dove know any cure. Matthew, help, help!”

CHAPTER XIX.

AND soon there stood beside them Doctor Matthew, the wise, faithful, deeply-loving physician and friend.

Drawn thither by Sophie Ariele's cry for help, after he had bravely helped to repulse the last desperate stand of the Moorish pirates, he now hastened to bind up the wounds of the brave Gustavus, and so became an assistant to the assisting.

And, perhaps, it might happen so everywhere upon earth, if every one rightly understood his power, and desired to employ it in love.

Very soon, with certain confidence, Matthew assured his rescued Ariele that he could preserve the life and health of his friend.

Concerning the manner of this cure, history is silent. It was accomplished only by surgical skill and deep medical science, and of this the muse of fabulous description has nothing further to say than—it attained its end. Her severer sister, the scientific muse, could relate far less, or rather, nothing at all, of the cure accomplished by Ariele's dove. Nevertheless, all was accomplished. Strong for action, and free from dreams; blooming with health, and clear in mind, stood Gustavus Gyllenskiöld before his restoring friends to bid them adieu.

But, as it often happens in the sorrowful moment of separation, no word escaped their lips; they looked at each other with gentle glances, and had inexpressibly much to say to each other, but yet remained ever silent.

Then Sophie Ariele took up her friendly guitar, and drew from it, as if questioning, a few sweet tones, and then sang, as in answer to them, the following words:—

“ Kindred of the laughing breezes,
 Sounds that wander through the air,
 Sweet voiced spirits ! soothe his bosom,
 Melt it, as the melted ore.
 Lest too deep a mortal sadness
 Press the soul to darksome night,
 The sweet muses from our sorrows,
 Out of woe awaken light ;

And it sparkles, sparkles brightly,
 That was dim and dead before ;
 And the world, no longer troubled,
 Mirrors back heaven's smile once more :
 He that truly seeks what knowledge
 Should inform the trusting mind,
 Heaven's bliss mingling with earth's sorrow,
 Sunbeam ever bright shall find."

In the last lingering chord of this song, Gustavus whispered—
 " You wish it—you command it with sweet power, kind songstress ! Therefore I will utter, as a farewell salutation, the question that sinks deepest into my earthly life—ah, yes, and it reaches also to my eternal life ! Sophie Ariele, art thou an airy daughter of the firmament, a lovely cloud-image, near us everywhere, yet everywhere far away from us ? or art thou a child of mortality like one of us—trembling, yet rejoicing, as we do, within the narrow bounds of an earthly life, where joy and sorrow are ever mingling, ever changing—trembling, fearing, yet joyously hoping, like we, for an eternal blessed peace, for an eternal refreshing communion which shall be hallowed by a pure, child-like innocence ; trembling in our hope, I say—for our path conducts us through the grave ; joyful in our fear—for that dark, nightly path guides us on to everlasting happiness ? Sophie Ariele, thou beautiful, unspeakably beautiful vision, WHO ART THOU ? "

Frightened at the words of his own conjuration, which so involuntarily had escaped his lips, the youth suddenly stopped. Indignant glances darted from the eyes of the physician, because a stranger (for the nearest and most deserving friend often seems as such when he meddles uncalled for in tender secrets) could dare to ask a question of his enigmatical, beautiful wife, which he had himself never found courage to ask.

But Sophie Ariele suspecting nothing of earthly confusion, laid her tender hands across each other on her bosom, raised her soft blue eyes to heaven, and whispered with a sweet voice—" He that is above knows that I am His for ever."

Involuntarily her two companions bowed low before the upward-glancing figure, and then as involuntarily grasped each other's hand. But it was not in token of reconciliation—this was not needed : it was an involuntary sign of the deepest, most blessed brotherhood.

Laughing like a child, after a few minutes of silence, Sophie Ariele said, "But it seems droll, I must acknowledge—very droll, that I know not what to think of myself, whether I am at home properly in the common real world or not. In truth, dear friends, dreams have sometimes risen up before me, that the airy castle of my parents was a sylph palace! But then I scold myself for being a little fool, and believe right well to understand that the whole phantom only springs from the wonderful stories which that faithful maiden, called Täublein, was often accustomed to chatter and to sing to me in my sleep, when a merry and sportive child. Now so much is certain, that if my parents were not sylphs, they were princes! and if they were not princes, yet," she added with mock solemnity, "I am still very high born in my paternal lofty castle." Then soon, with deep serene gravity, she said again—"All we, who are called mortals, are, in truth, very high born! altogether children of the Most High, refreshed by His heart, which is love; and preserved by His love from everlasting destruction, if we will only allow ourselves to be preserved. And our origin arises from dark, holy clouds, like the streams which spring between high rocks and the vapour of heaven; a wonderful riddle never to be understood, until it is seen in sweetly refreshing, or fearfully thundering power. Sophie Ariele is nothing fearful! Why will you torment her and yourself, by sorrowfully inquiring from whence she came? Truly she herself knows not!" she added almost mournfully, her little hands folded together across her breast. But then she took her harp, and sung solemnly, with her eyes cast up to heaven, the following words, accompanied by the chorus-like harmony of the strings—

"That which has a touch of sorrow,
 Yet rejoices Ariele's soul:
 Ariele strives for what is distant
 In the heavens, and beautiful.
 Where we come from, all is darkness:
 It is plain whereto we rove—
 To the eternal starry brightness,
 Wherein all things live and love!

"Who that, in the night's still watches,
 Gazes on the mystic stars,
 Feels not that his soul is lifted
 Far above all earthly cares?"

Yet are they but glimmering shadows
Of the eternal light of love ;
To the rapture-drunken spirit
Shall be given the fount above.

“ We our names in words like sunbeams
Written in the heavens shall find,
If we here in lowly meekness
Love with true and faithful mind :
Though awhile in mortal sadness
Here we bear our earthly strife,
Though the world may frown upon us,
Heaven shall smile, for *Death is Life !* ”

For the last time, while these words were dying away, she laid her hand in that of Gustavus. He breathed a soft kiss upon it; then pressed his friend to his breast, in a brotherly embrace, and hastened quickly from the room. And neither Sophie nor the physician ever saw Gustavus again with their mortal eyes.

CHAPTER XX.

FOR more than twenty years, in combat of different kinds, Colonel Gyllenskiöld led an active, richly varied, and beautiful life ; without once going back to the strand of Marseilles, or hearing any definite news of his kind friends who lived there. Sometimes, indeed, when flights of doves swept in joyous circles above his head for a moment he would fancy that Sophie Arièle's favourite floated with the crowd ; or, perhaps, when at one time before his tent, or on the sea, close before the window of his cabin, a white dove rested, and looked in upon him with her innocent, patient eyes, kindly cooing and decking her tender feathers in the sunshine or in the silvery moonlight, then he indeed thought he beheld a messenger from that sweet lady of Provence. But often, as such dove-teaming visions came to him, no one of them all had any message, any sign to bring for him; for, however softly and cautiously he approached them, like other wild dwellers in the air, the shy creatures instantly spread their wings and disappeared.

But what, however, never left him, was a sweet and joyful enthu-

siasm, which, like a promise of success, before such salutation of the doves, each time filled the soul of Gustavus Gyllenskiöld. His soldiers, both on land and sea, had quickly remarked it. They called the doves omens of victory for their colonel; and when a little soft one was seen to hover near Gyllenskiöld, the old warriors were accustomed to present their arms with particular care, admonishing their younger comrades in the well-known lines :—

“ When the dove greets Gyllenskiöld,
Then for battle thirsts Gyllenskiöld ;
The brazen die rattles and rolls—
Rolls for victory, not for gold,
And victory smiles on Gyllenskiöld !”

One day, the bold Gustavus crossed with a frigate, in sight of an almost uninhabited island on the African coast ; to this island a corsair, from whom he had rescued a French merchant-man, had fled for refuge. Gyllenskiöld, terrible to the pirates above all their other enemies, determined on no account to let this destructive Moor slip a second time from his hands, and took up his station, therefore, off the entrance of the narrow cove in which he lay. Further in he could not follow him ; for both the fast-closing shades of evening, and his Swedish crew's want of acquaintance with the iron-bound coast, rendered that for the present impracticable.

In the clear moonlight the frigate kept in sight of the island harbour, and the French merchantman whom she had rescued did not move from her side. Gyllenskiöld imputed this solely to the wish of her captain that she should not remain in this dangerous region without the protection of the Swedish man-of-war ; and he had already made a resolution, after he should have completely gained the victory, of accompanying his protégée to some Spanish or Portuguese seaport-town. The boat which he had dispatched with this message, and with the question how far the merchantman would wish for his guidance, brought the answer back—“ Home to Marseilles !”

Gyllenskiöld's heart beat high at this answer, and higher still when some Marseillan youths, armed, came on board, singing one of those joyous battle songs which had been often sung in their military exercises on the coasts of Provence ; and when, as the leader of these brave strangers, stood before him one who would have been

more properly called a boy than a man : something in his pleasing countenance reminded Gustavus of Sophie Ariele's feminine softness, something also of the physician's bold, manly strength ; but he resembled much more the former than the latter. Yes, it was in truth Sophie's and Doctor Matthew's joyous son, who was travelling on a journey from Marseilles, and who now with generous courage had persuaded the captain of the trader to allow him, with one or two other companions who were equally disposed for the enterprise, to strengthen the crew of their preserver.

Gustavus Gyllenskiöld, in the midst of his joy at this happy meeting, was terrified at the thought that the blooming youth, by an unseen higher Providence, might be torn away from his side in the approaching deadly combat. And then the piteous lamentations of Sophie Ariele, and the deep mourning of the hospitable physician, filled the soul of their former guest ; and with an eloquence that the brave soldier till now, perhaps, had never used even to urge his companions to arms, he strove to deter the dear youth from the approaching battle. But he felt the current of his well-meaning words soon checked by an indignant glance from the youth, and still more by the question—

“How is this? My father and my mother have often spoken with approving words of your noble enthusiasm in war ; and now by such petty fears would you dissuade my parent's only son from a feat of arms that might bring him honour? That would seem very unlike you. But pardon me, Sir Colonel, that noble fire which sparkles from your eyes at my too hasty language assures me to whom I am come, to the Colonel Gustavus Gyllenskiöld! Your earnest dissuasions had almost made me err. Indeed, the boldness with which you loosed our ship from the corsair, and turned the tables upon him in his turn, this might have—this should have—”

But his voice had become every moment softer, and, notwithstanding all his efforts to prevent it, every moment more faltering, as Gyllenskiöld's searching and glowing eyes met his. He grew quite silent before this kind but earnest glance, and thought to himself, “Ah! truly ; with my too forward boldness I have destroyed one of the dearest joys of my life. For I can plainly see, that, for my presumption and disrespect, he will not take me with him to the attack upon the rocky island.”

And as if Gustavus had perceived the thoughts of the youth, he answered him — “You shall, notwithstanding, go with us, dear boy.” But in the joy which lighted up all the features of the youth was mingled an expression of indignant pride, and he murmured—

“Boy! That is a name I have not been accustomed to hear for many a long day. Pardon me, sir, for what I say. My Christian name is Gustavus, and after you I have the honour of being so christened. A long year indeed it was after you went away from Marseilles, that I came into the world; yet the fame of the many beautiful, knightly deeds of the noble Gustavus Gyllenskiöld oftentimes reached it; and so my parents thought, and indeed with good truth, that they could provide me no more noble incentive for a glorious career than if they christened me after their noble guest, Gustavus. May I request, sir, that you will in future call me by this honourable name?”

“Right willingly, from my heart, my brave Gustavus!” said Gyllenskiöld, deeply moved, as he pressed him in his arms.

And now they sat together at the joyous evening meal, liberal as the ship’s fare could well afford; and Gyllenskiöld said, “I must show you, Gustavus, that I have learnt something of entertainment under the pleasantly hospitable roof of your parents; or perhaps not under their roof, for our most happy meal-times we passed in your garden by the sea, and spent there certainly our most refreshing hours.”

Then it seemed to the heart of Gyllenskiöld, moved by many sweet emotions, that he was again indeed at Marseilles, in the garden of Doctor Matthew. There lay the ship, now at anchor, as still and firm as a sea-coast rooted by imperishable rocks, and the waves splashed and bubbled against it as against a peaceful shore.

Gyllenskiöld could not refrain from asking the youth about his parental dwelling; and as, with that peculiar clearness of remembrance which is common to all, or at least to the most part of north countrymen, he dwelt on the peculiarities of Doctor Matthew’s home and economy of life, the young Gustavus felt himself transported back to that sweet place and all his earliest remembrances. As he was once describing one of his boyish battles, and the provocation which had caused it, he suddenly stopped short; a slight blush of

embarrassment passed over his cheeks ; yet soon, as if laughing at himself, he added joyfully—

“ Would you believe it possible, Colonel ?—nevertheless it is quite true—that my quarrel with my schoolfellow arose entirely, because the foolish boy maintained that my dear, beautiful mother was, in reality, not a child of earth, but, as he was pleased to express it, only a mere spirit of the air. I was left conqueror in the contest, and willingly forgave him from my heart all the pain he had caused me, and ever since then we have loved each other dearly ; and he is here also upon your noble ship, the dearest and bravest of all my companions. But, strange as it may seem, it is also true, dear sir, that some quite grown-up people in Marseilles have also taken it into their head that my mother was originally a spirit of the air ; and is only by marriage with my father connected with this earthly life.”

The boy had scarcely said this than he shrank back, seized by a peculiar shudder, and whispered, “ What was that ? ”

It was nothing more than a white dove, which hovered about them in soft, scarcely audible flutterings ; then quickly ascending, disappeared in the feeble starlight of the darkling heaven.

Blushing, the youth said, “ You will argue nothing in my favour from this strange trembling, Colonel. To-morrow, among the firing of guns and clashing of swords, I will show no signs of fear ; but this white dove came before my eyes so strangely. These beautiful white birds are always especially fostered by my parents, and it is for this reason that my mother by some people is thought to be a spirit of the air. It is true they have one other reason for supposing so, but it might seem like boasting or pride in me, if I were to tell it to you.”

“ Never mind ; but tell me, dear Gustavus ! ” said Gyllenskiöld, “ you need fear nothing of that kind from me.”

“ Be it so,” exclaimed the youth, joyfully ; “ I will not, then, conceal from you that my mother still blooms as before, in the almost childlike beauty of spring. Often, in my boyish years, she seemed to me to be my playfellow ; and now as my sister, even as my younger sister. There may be many autumnal and winterly souls which do not understand this beautiful freshness ; and while some have said that my beautiful mother is like the ever-reviving

breeze of spring, that grows not old, others have looked upon her entered as a spirit of the air."

At these words he laughed heartily ; but again a white dove flew near him, and he bent low to it, full of grave emotion, and whispered — " If thou belongest truly to the band of my mother's doves, greet Sophie Ariele with kind flutterings of thy wing, as a salutation from her Gustavus, and also from the brave Colonel Gyllenskiöld."

CHAPTER XXI.

DEEPLY moved by these words of his young fellow-soldier, the noble Swede soon saw him sink into a tranquil slumber ; his gentle form breathing silently, as in the bosom of the sweetest peace. And now how very like, when the fire of his eye, which he inherited from his father, was hidden beneath the covering of his soft eyelid, and no proudly indignant or boldly laughing emotion passed over his tenderly chiselled lips—now how inexpressibly and affectingly was he like his mother !

" Oh ! may God guard thee, and for her sake preserve thee on the morrow," said the Colonel, softly ; and spread his mantle carefully over the slumbering youth.

At this moment the boy became disturbed. At length, overpowered with the deep sleep of childhood, he stammered the words, " Mother !" and " Father !" and " Good night." And then added, more placidly, " Let me now have my sleep out quietly. Tomorrow, indeed, the Colonel shall teach me the solemn sentence ; but it is quite right to sleep well, long, and peacefully before a solemn lesson. Is it not ?"

And thereupon he stretched himself at length, and lay, as the moon shed her pale beams upon him, like a marble statue at his friend's feet.

Gyllenskiöld felt tears flow over his cheeks, and murmured, as he raised his eyes and thoughts to Heaven—" Oh ! thou all-merciful, turn away the solemn words, before which my soul trembles ! In-

deed, indeed : *Death is Life*. But, ah ! for this blooming angel-boy ; earthly life is, as yet, so beautiful, so lovely !—”

Here one of his officers entered, with a message of importance ; and Gyllenskiöld felt himself cheerfully enlivened by the expectation of the morrow's battle and triumph. His alarm about the solitary youth faded before his eager anxiety for the management of the combat. He launched a boat immediately, that he might prove with his own eyes the truth of the intelligence he had heard ; and, in company with a few chosen and fully armed soldiers, steered to the bushy promontory, to fix on a good place to make the attack on the morrow.

The rocky coasts lay fearfully still before them, surrounded and danced over by the foamy heads of the breakers. Relying securely on their watchful sentinels, the wearied pirates had almost all of them fallen into the deepest sleep. Groups of dark figures could be easily discovered through the clearness of the night, as they were stretched upon the slopes or summits of the lofty hills of the island. A few sentinels were standing here and there, but they were also weary, and leant carelessly upon their arms, so that they seemed rather to be resting than watching. Meanwhile the roaring of the breakers completely drowned the sound made by the oars of their approaching enemy ; while, at the same time, the towering clouds of spray, and, in some degree also, the close, leafy underwood of the headland, continued to conceal them from sight.

The boat thus landed unnoticed, and scarcely had Gyllenskiöld with his quick glance marked the favourable position of the place, than he immediately sent back the light boat, in order that, by quick passages to and fro, it might fetch over as many of the crew as possible before break of dawn ; for he had resolved, if it were practicable, to spare his frigate the danger of sailing among the shallows of a bay so little known. In vain did his soldiers implore him to go back again now to the ship, and return with the last division, and then, without needlessly compromising his safety, to lead the united force to victory. He looked at them, as if blaming them for supposing that he would do so ; “ Yet,” he added, kindly, “ I thank you for having reminded me of the last division—with this, and on no account sooner—Hearken, my friends, who are now about to steer back to the ship ;

remember what I say, and perform it faithfully. On no account whatever let the young Frenchman, who joined us from the Mar-seillan ship, come over before the last time. This is my express command, let him and his bold companions object as they please."

And now with a perfectly light heart—for he hoped that all danger would be over before the arrival of the last company—full of secret yet brave delight, he ordered everything for the approaching decisive combat.

But scarcely had the boat deposited two of its little cargoes upon the shore, and had pushed off from the land, in order to return for a third, than a gun from one of the sentinel Swedes sounded through the silent night, and the winding cliffs of the island re-echoed it again and again. In a moment the Moorish robbers could be seen upon the hills, aroused from their slumber, seizing their weapons, and arranging themselves in order for battle; so that a sudden attack on the part of the few who had landed—and Gyllenskiöld, for one moment, did entertain that idea—would be nothing but to leap from despair into utter destruction. No course, therefore, was left him to pursue, but to conceal, as long as possible, the small number of his followers among the bushes on the shore, until there was a chance they might receive sufficient reinforcements from the ship.

The shrubs and trees on the strand favoured this design, and the quiet, cool valour of the northern soldiers led them still to hope for a prosperous issue. The first wild attack of the pirates was completely repulsed, and before the well-aimed guns and pistols of the Swedes a considerable number of Musselmén, either dead or severely wounded, covered the field, while the principal part collected on the hill to prepare for a fresh attack. That this fresh attack must take place was beyond all doubt, for the pirates must, by this partly won victory, have discovered the only possible way that remained for the preservation of their bold enemies; for when the clear moonlight should discover to the terrified sentinels how slowly, and with how few men the boat would steer through the breakers, it was certain that they would immediately, with all the force of despair, attack the soldiers who were already landed.

Calmly considering all these disadvantages, Gyllenskiöld angrily walked up to the sentinel, inquiring from him the cause of the

foolish alarm gun. The bearded soldier calmly replied—"Colonel, for that you must not chide me. It was no Moorish enemy, but a friend from the ancient heroes of bygone days, come perhaps to call you and me, and our companions, home to those blessed halls above; and would not you, my brave Colonel, gladly receive so solemn, yet so welcome a message?"

Gyllenskiöld bent his proud head affirmatively, and the Swede related his official news in the following words:—

"From the foamy waves you see yonder, sprang up what seemed to be the heads of men, but not as if they were swimming, but walking upright through the waves, as reapers marching through high luxuriant corn; they came through the breakers that every moment foamed more wildly, and mingled with them were heads of women, with cheeks of grizzly red—how hideous in the pale moonlight! and there were heroes of noble bearing, with crowns on their heads—"

"I know them! I know them!" said Gyllenskiöld, with difficulty repressing the shudder that passed through his inmost senses. "You need not, at such a moment, describe merely unsubstantial dreams!"

But the Swede interrupted haughtily—"In good truth, Colonel, you do me wrong: I have neither slept nor dreamed, but watched at my post as beseems an honourable warrior of our north country to do. And if at first I imagined the heads in the waves to be ghostly inhabitants of the world of spirits, yet I soon became aware that they were not mere shadowy forms. Erect and kinglike, one of the crown-bearers came walking to the land. He had a deep wound in the breast. He stood opposite to me, and bent his head—whether to me, or to some one else, or to us all, I do not rightly know; but I presented my weapon to him, as to a royal personage whether living or dead. That he did not belong to the Saracens you might be perfectly certain, if you only once looked into his large rolling blue eyes. But when he moved on, as though he would pass my post, I lowered my weapon and said, 'Stop, if it please your majesty, the soldier must fulfil his duty. Give me the password, or I must fire!' Then he laid his hand on his ponderous sword, and advanced with giant strides. I fired! and like a flash of lightning, or a sweeping sword-stroke, it lighted the empty

space around me. Then the kingly form smiled as he floated away upon a snow-white steed (when or from whence the noble creature came I know not), and beckoned kindly to me, as if he would say, 'Come joyfully after me, you will have many good companions.' And how, I ask you, could a faithful soldier upon watch act otherwise than I have done? If any one was to blame, it was the old crowned hero; and you and I, my Colonel, and perhaps indeed many more among us, may call upon him to answer to the charge, before the sun rises over these southern waves."

"That is probable!" said Gyllenskiöld, thoughtfully; "the Moors upon the hills are gathering in stronger and better arranged order."

Once more Gyllenskiöld glanced towards the ship, as if, by a rapid movement, it was possible she might yet release him from the threatening overwhelming force of the enemy. But her befriending form rocked peacefully in the moonlight, and sail and pennant drooped sleepily from the spars. A perfect calm paralysed all her movements. Then over Gyllenskiöld's lips passed the tune of a song, the first lines of which, when a boy, he had heard sung with peculiar emotion:—

"Bravely are we called to die,
And not to be deceived by hope!"

Loud and joyfully he called to his Swedes—"Bravely are we called to die!" and resolutely they returned the salute, and pressed close together, man to man; a noble band united in the brotherhood of death. The Saracens descended slowly and deliberately from the hill, their two wings stretching forward in overwhelming force, so that the whole body wore the appearance of their own banner of victory, the crescent, which rose proudly in the midst.

One more look, as taking leave of Ariele's son, Gyllenskiöld turned towards his ship; and, in the hope that he might once more see the beloved form of the youth, he raised to his eyes a glass given him by Farenberg, and constructed purposely for sea voyages. Then suddenly a form appeared on the edge of the ship, in a white flying mantle; it was the same white mantle with which he had before covered the slumbering Gustavus; and, as if with wings, the vision stretched forward. "The boy will throw himself into the sea, in order to reach the shore!" thought Gyllenskiöld,

terrified ; “ a practised swimmer in the prime of manhood would never make the passage hither. And then the breakers ! And if he got through *them*—to meet a bloody death here on land.” Still the youth seemed to wish to spring into the water, but he was prevented by those around him : he struggled angrily to free himself from their hold. Suddenly he raised both hands, as if he were vehemently imploring the silent night-heaven ; and lo, the pennant of the ship began to fly, the sails to swell in the favouring breeze, the busy crowd on the deck to increase. Then the frigate rocked in the rising wind of the early dawn ; and, rapidly advancing to the scene of combat, it thundered a cannonade of shot into the wing of the advancing Saracens. Howling, the broken lines fell back one upon the other. “ Forward ! ” cried Gyllenskiold, exultingly, as he rushed with his Swedes from the bushy strand, and put their terrified enemies to an irretrievable rout.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE battle was completely over. The pirate ship had been taken, its crew were either killed or dispersed. But in vain did the Swedes seek for their brave leader, in vain did the youths of Marseilles seek for their brave comrade Gustavus. Could the two have perished in some way together ? If so, the victory over these hordes of barbarians would seem indeed to be most dearly purchased.

Notwithstanding all the inquiries that were made for the noble friends, no farther trace of them could be discovered than that the youth Gustavus, after he had caused the ship to enter the bay by his strange invocation of the breezes, had thrown himself overboard full of mad desire for the combat, and reached the land. Some declared they had seen his white mantle again after that fluttering among a crowd of Moorish figures. But the exact place of this encounter, after the tumult of the nightly battle, and in the silence of the rising morning, they did not remember sufficiently well to find again. Gyllenskiold had been seen for the last time

by his Swedes, rushing with sudden and to them incomprehensible madness down a steep precipice after a number of the flying enemy, so that it was not clear whether he had fallen or leapt. By the time his less adventurous followers had gained the level beach below, he and his adversaries had entirely disappeared. It almost seemed as if the surf had washed them away together.

A low sobbing sound of lamentation, almost like that of a softly weeping boy, who had only just ended his first angry, sorrowful burst of passion, at length drew the eager soldiers to a place on the woody shore, where traces of blood on the boughs indicated a hardly fought battle, that was indeed scarcely over. Somewhat further, two Moors lay dead on the sand, their heads cleft in twain. After a few steps to the nearest winding of the cliff, the Swedes found their noble leader, at least his corpse, with a fearful wound upon his valiant breast, pouring out his heart's blood.

It was affecting to behold how the young Marseillais, Gustavus, supported his sinking head, and shed besides such hot, scalding tears; while a snowy-haired old sailor, looking on in silence, sat with folded hands at the feet of the departed hero.

The boy cried, full of lamentation, to the newly arrived soldiers—
“ Ah! woe is me; mine is the fault! It was in rescuing me, that the pious, generous knight fell. Oh, what a cursed zeal was it that drove me from the ship, and made me swim to shore! Here two Moors halted in their flight, and rushed in wild fury against me, intending to make my death an offering to their revenge. Alas! would that they had accomplished their angry purpose! I lay already spent upon the ground, and only gave faint blows, that fell rather in the air than upon my enemies (beetles, overpowered by ants, struggle thus in the empty rage of despair), when suddenly, from the neighbouring cliffs, my noble godfather, Gustavus Gyllenskiöld, saw my distress; and, like a gloriously winged messenger of heaven, he flew down upon my foes, and laid them low in the sand upon the shore;—they must be still lying there;—but when he turned towards me—oh, horror!—then I saw that his garment and breast were dyed with the terrible wound which he had received in the battle for my preservation; and here he now lies! and here he will now die!”

He began again silently to weep, and one of the soldiers, who had just arrived, said somewhat roughly, and unfeelingly—

“ Yes, indeed, that is what we get by it ! Here he lies now, and here he dies, and our loss is and always will be the greatest. Would that the French rascal had remained altogether upon his Marseilles ship ! We should then have had our beloved, noble colonel still safe and sound among us.”

And the poor lamenting youth only began to weep still more heartily and despairingly. But then the silver-haired sailor at Gyllenskiöld's feet arose, and said reprovingly to his angry fellow-soldier—

“ You—take heed ! What you have said was not exactly the best thing that you could have said—throughout, it was not well ! God forbid that our dear, dying Colonel should be aware of this ; else you have given pain to his departing hero's soul ; and look ! a painful quiver about his mouth makes me almost fear that it is so ; so I will speak in his stead—will speak such words as would flow from his brave soul, and would be proper for the protection and happiness of this noble boy. Where would have been our brave Colonel without him ? Where should all we, who first landed upon the island, have been without him ? Stretched out upon the earth ye would be lying, like those bloody Moors ; or shackled, you would have been gnashing your teeth, or groaning in the power of the pirates. For, while the calm held us bound with our ship in idle view of your combat and your distress, this wonderful boy called on the breezes to swell our sails, and they obeyed his voice, and carried us softly and swiftly towards the shore, so that we could easily fire upon your overpowering enemy !”

All looked astonished at the youth ; but he, drying his tears, and pushing his fair locks from his open brow, said just as astonished, “ What then do you expect to find so strange in me ? You are in error ; I have indeed invoked the breezes, invoked them full of the deepest, most fervent anguish of soul ; but that their spirits heard, or at any rate answered to my call, of that I know nothing. I pray you do not perplex me by such wonderful words, which even in my earliest childhood flitted about me deceivingly, and which now in my deep, deep anguish of soul, occur to me again. Truly I am no fickle child of the breezes ; alas, if it were so, would the death-wounds of this dying hero cause me such un-

speakable sorrow?" And again he wept bitterly; and, pushing away from his forehead and temples the golden locks that fell over them, he bent his blooming face over the quiet and motionless one of his friend.

The old north-country man then said, "Whether consciously or unconsciously he holds such strange dominion over the elements, matters but little; to me it certainly appeared that it was at the fairy call of this youth that our sails swelled. And were it not so, it was still *his* words of fire, *his* noble earnest prayers, *his* rapid and animating signs, lightening us all up like a flashing meteor—above all, it was *his* wonderful power, which inspired the dullest and most anxious among us with hope to venture everything and strength to perform it, and urged us to run our ship into the dangerous bay, and to preserve our heroic Colonel, and you all. *That is what this boy has done!*"

They all bent with one accord before the weeping youth; but he said, looking up most sorrowfully, "Yes; would that it had been an act of preservation, then it might have passed for something honourable. But there he lies, alas! and there he dies!"

"*Death is Life!*" said Gyllenskiöld, once more unclosing his eyes in inexpressible serenity to the light of an earthly day; and turning to the youth, he continued in a firm and solemn voice, "See, my young Gustavus; now everything is clear to me. I saw in my last dream your dear parents, and they declared to me what you should learn from me before you go forth upon your journey. The sentence might indeed have sounded too solemn, in the moment of separation, for them to have spoken it to thee, although it is in reality a sentence full of gladness; they referred you therefore to me. Oh, my young friend, in a fearfully dark path of error I entered your parents' house for the first time. '*Life is Death!*' cried for ever the horrible visions of my decaying, dreamily darkening existence. '*Life is Life!*' the sweetly peaceful days at Marseilles taught me. But in *one* infinitely more blessed hour there, I laid hold of a far higher truth. '*Death is Life!*' I then could say, and '*Death is Life!*' your beautiful mother sang to me, full of inspiration, at the moment when we separated; and now to you, sweet Gustavus, yet in the bright spring-time of your earthly life, now when I am dying, I can say to you, with the transporting assurance in my soul, '*Death is Life!*'

Not that, dear fresh blooming youth, the joys of thy life should sink for that reason towards the grave. No; but in order that they may rise more swiftly to heaven, and may shine the more brightly in the blissful certainty that—*there is no death*. Lo! the solemn messenger we are accustomed to call by that name comes to me, and my sinking eyes fail before his heavenly glance; this earthly world of dreams disappears; and deep, deep within, the holy light from the divine throne shines full upon me; secretly, quite secretly, it glimmered in me before. How strangely till now the shadows of dreams have hidden and concealed it! What will it now signify whether in this ever-changing, enigmatic world we have borne crowns or garlands, a shepherd's cap or a beggar's hood?

“The old crown-bearer indeed beckons kindly to me from above. But as long as I remained here in this dark world of dreams I misunderstood him; he meant by his signs to point to a far different, a far richer crown. And the spirit of the air! Oh, Sophie Ariele, thou lovely, wise confidant of heaven! how clearly thou saidst we were very high-born! We are all watered by the blessed fountains of the highest love!”

And *Love* was his last breath. He lay a beautiful corpse, smiling sweetly under the brightly beaming light of morning, and the flowing waves of the sea sang a soft lullaby to the last slumber of their friend. “And Love,” so the young Gustavus felt it breathe through his soul, moved by the sweetest sorrow, “love shall sound as the first jubilee of the departed warrior in the eternal halls of victory!”

* * * * *

After the interval of some years, when Ariele's son brought home this solemn news, Doctor Matthew, as soon as his weighty business permitted, erected a monument to Gyllenskiöld's memory at the place in the garden where the three united souls had often felt together a happy participation of joyful emotions. The emblem and motto he required and obtained from Sophie Ariele; and at her desire he ornamented the monument of his friend with the figure, in raised alabaster work of a dove, flying from out a sea of flame towards heaven, with the inscription—

“*Death is Life.*”

THE

Christmas Tree.

IN a mountain village, not far from a large and populous commercial town, the elderly wife of a worthy retired merchant was sitting one afternoon of a Christmas Eve, spinning at the window. As she turned her little wheel, she revolved, in thought, the cycle of the past, and joined, on the extended thread, one departed year to another. In this manner many a Christmas festival again set up its little light before her; while that of to-day awaited only, as formerly, the flash of joy by which it should be kindled. "It was, then, alas! another time," she sighed, as, raising her eyes from her work, and to avoid the afflicting retrospect, she looked forth upon the garden; but a heavy fleece of snow, pressed down by thawing, watery vapours, had fallen without, and lay along the earth, giving it no robe of cheerful whiteness, but rather one of sullied moisture, as its festal garb. The good woman let fall her thread, and still moving the wheel mechanically with her foot, folded her arms, leant back in her low-cushioned chair, and cast her thoughts and eye over the garden-hedge, towards the churchyard wall, that sheltered the grave of a little maiden who had died in childhood. She said nothing, and might, perhaps, have had only indistinct thoughts; yet she felt a heavy melancholy.

Solitary tears ran down her cheeks, and quite obliterated all images of Christmas joy.

But it was the heavy pressure with which the presence of an only son, who, dragged from his early career in life, had become a prey to sickness, that chiefly burthened her. When yet almost a boy, he had been drawn away, by some auxiliaries, to the French army; and now, nipped in his bloom, weary and wasted, was sent back again to his paternal home. It was true his youthful nature seemed now slowly to revive; but the genuine activity, the energy which resists and overcomes opposition, that power, she was obliged to confess, might never, or only through long, considerate care, be again with difficulty restored. And what would be the end of the slippery course of his mistaken life? whither would it lead? Outgrown as to his earlier pursuits, spoiled for bodily exertion, for mental unfitted, who would support the helpless one, when his father's eyes should be closed, or her busy hands no more be able to ply their accustomed labour? She had now trouble enough to maintain the tottering household, and since the ravages of the war, the slender income had already been too scant, for her to think of any saving for the forlorn one's future condition. "It is a misfortune," her husband was accustomed to reply to similar complaints; "but it must be borne." She had also heard, on the previous Sunday, an excellent discourse on the text—"Be not anxious for the coming morrow." Her heart had thereby been comforted, and made more trustful. On returning from the church, she had gratefully pressed her husband's hand, and with the courage of inspiration, had spoken of overcoming present sorrows, and of her confidence in better days. But that which then raised her spirits, though it had not altogether vanished, had yet been interrupted and weakened by numberless daily trials.

"He has well spoken," thought she, resting her head upon her hand. "It is for me to endure; and the hour may yet come when the burden will be reckoned to me yet more heavy and oppressive. Still we are bidden to be of cheerful heart—'He who clothes and cherishes the lilies of the field, and the fowls of heaven, has also for thee and thine warm winter raiment and sustenance; and besides, a joyful day in store, when it shall be needed.' Yes, yes," she sighed, shaking her head, "there, in my husband's chamber above, which

no one approaches within ten paces, where neither question nor complaint intrudes, where it is warm and still and lonely, there also abides the soul, tranquil and retired; and whatever storm bursts in upon it, it can also, by itself, contend with: but here, below, all that is painful and trying has to be accomplished." While thus gradually yielding to disquiet, her sadness was interrupted by the approach of her sickly son: she heard him cough while yet at the threshold. The sound, to-day, seemed to her more hollow than formerly. Her bosom was painfully agitated: anxiously she beheld his sorrowful figure, as he entered, reflected in a looking-glass opposite the door. Yet she forbore to look on himself, as her observant glance was ever sensitive of his presence; and in order to appear less anxious, she turned herself towards the window, at the same time exclaiming, "Old Martha's gay mantle flutters about her so widely in the snow-storm, as if she were hurrying with something wonderful."

The young man, who had also gone up to the window, replied, "Does the robust old woman still carry the letters round the mountains?"

"Certainly, certainly," said his mother. "Yes," she continued, smiling, "here may be seen how one's humour fashions things in one's-self and others. At the time thou wert absent, when I saw between the bushes the tip of the mantle glimmering down the hill-path, my heart beat so violently, as if—God forgive me—Providence itself were deciding on our weal and woe. Now, Martha is to me—just as she is—only a letter-carrier, who can neither give me much, nor take away." She said the last words with a careless tone and demeanour, whilst the thought arose in her with strange vividness—"What if the post should bring me, to-day, something very pleasing and agreeable! Perhaps, some quite unexpected, joyful intelligence!" She had no conception of what it might be that should so nearly concern her from afar; but the thought, undefined as it was, served to quicken her imagination with unusual activity.

"Dear mother," rejoined her son, whom her expressions had arrested, "the future is a secret for every one: man often knows not how much he expects from it, but, in the end, all hope for the best. He who looks into it otherwise, does but plunge into a bottomless abyss."

It affected the agitated lady indescribably, to hear him so speak of the future. Whom did he mean? his nearest kindred on earth, or another, who perhaps lay nearer to him than he was conscious of? "Benjamin!" she softly said, seizing and anxiously pressing his hand.

He might well have felt what she was not able to express; he, however, let it remain so, and, in order to divert her attention, hastily inquired, "What does busy Martha do there over the narrow bridge, at the little ruined shepherd's hut? I think it stands empty; at least I am told so."

"In that you have been rightly informed," responded his mother. "After the death of old David, who would not leave the decaying cottage, no one has again occupied it. But who knows whether the dexterous woman may not there have discovered a little corner for the more convenient bestowal of some of the articles she brings with her, until she has finished her rounds? Such people understand well how to make use of every thing. I should like to know, however," she continued inquisitively, "what she really purposes." Here she paused, as she attentively looked in the specified direction; while Benjamin, tired, and having no particular sympathy for the mysterious village incident, seated himself in an arm-chair. "How, by accident, one thing springs out of another!" resumed his mother, after a while. "See! Benjamin, I look many times a day towards the bridge, and beyond it; must look thither, if I only direct my eyes on the road. I do so, and think nothing of it; but to-day, old stories, long banished from my thoughts, come again to me, to make my heart still sadder, and this holy eve, which should be for all one of joy, more lonesome and melancholy. Thou understandest well what I mean," she added, wiping away a tear.

"No!" replied her son, astonished, and vainly endeavouring to realize the import of her words.

"No?" inquired she, wondering. "But," she continued, "I know that the loss of the good and beautiful Anna cannot affect thy heart as it does mine. She was still a child when thou leftest thy paternal home; and when also thou taughtest her to read and write, and wast so glad that we stood to the poor orphan in her parents' room, thou wast yet a wayward boy, and sawest little of the timid child. Afterwards, when she was so unaccount-

ably lost to us, thou wast far away, and time, and the many new events of the present, have all too much effaced the distant images for thee now to have any particular recollection of them."

"Yet, yet!" said the young man, striving, as well as he was able, to recall what he had forgotten, "I very distinctly remember the pretty child, whom you as tenderly cherished as if she were your own. Ah, yes!" he added, with animation, "I was then fourteen years old, when I went to my uncle's residence, in order to attend school, and Anna might have been eight or nine. Since then, indeed, I have not again been here. First came my removal, then my studies, afterwards service in the army. A broad gulf lies between now and then."

"Therefore it is," replied his mother, resuming the thread of her contemplations, "that thou canst not at all sympathize with me in the sentiments which yonder little hut awakens."

"I have ever forborne," replied Benjamin, calmly, "to ask you of the minuter circumstances of the poor orphan's disappearance, from unwillingness to revive painful recollections in your soul."

"Kind son!" she smiled, with emotion, as with one hand she wiped the tears from her cheeks, and extended the other towards him.

He kissed her hand, and said—"Yet tell me, dear mother, if it will not pain you, how came Anna to forsake you?"

"Forsake! Benjamin," exclaimed his mother, sensitively; "she did not forsake us; she was torn from us—that I shall ever believe. But who they were that dealt us the blow—How crafty villains have contrived to keep the wicked deed so long concealed that is known to God only, who, in due time, will yet bring all to light; but this much I tell thee, that, from the first moment, the child clung to me even as the ivy that creeps on yonder wall. I know too well that her heart was rent asunder when they dragged her away from hence."

"Dragged away?" asked the young man, incredulously. "Have you then any trace that such a deed of violence was done?"

"No trace," she replied, vehemently; "yet sooner would we that the mystery were unexplained than mistrust a faithful heart. See! my dear," she continued, "as when I first beheld Anna's open countenance, and a voice spoke within me, 'In her there is no guile,' so she still remains ever before me, and no one shall be able to dis-

figure or pervert the image. There," she proceeded, turning herself nearer to the window, and tapping, with extended finger against the panes, "there, upon the narrow plank, sat the forlorn child, careless and cracking nuts, as contented as if the world were hers, whilst I went carrying to the dying grandfather his final meal. I was startled when I cast my eyes upon her; for before I had never seen her, nor even known of her existence. As I was now about crossing the bridge, and she kept running on, and then sitting down in my way, I stopped and accosted her. She raised up her head, shook the long fair ringlets from her brow, and fixing her large eyes confidently upon me, smiled, and reaching forth her delicate little hand, offered me of her store of nuts, which she had previously taken from her pocket. I thanked her for the present, and inquired who she was, and whence she came; whereupon, abashed, she muttered something half-aloud between her lips, drew up her little feet, and hastened away. I gazed after her; she so moved me, I knew not what to think of her. Perhaps, I thought, she might belong to the old shepherd, who, from kindness, had lately brought her hither. But what would become of the fair violet amid the matted moss? it would surely be stifled. As thus thinking, I entered the little room, and said, 'Good day, father,' and having set on the table the little provision I had brought, I sat down by the side of the sick man's bed. 'He sleeps well!' I said, softly, and remained quiet a while. I wished to wait till he should open his eyes, and observe me; but his slumber lasted long, while my heart throbbed with anguish; every moment I became more uneasy. I then glanced round upon the walls, for I did not trust myself to look upon the sleeper beside me. Above the bed hung the shepherd's wallet, and by the side stood his tall staff, at the lower end bound with iron, while from its top a long, faded ribbon rolled down to the grey-headed man's pillow. There he lay stretched out at his length, his white hair and silvery beard gently quivering as he softly drew his breath. The silk band on the staff was now stirred by a rush of wind from the opened door, as the little one entered. She timidly remained standing behind the old man's bed, while I beckoned her cautiously to approach; but my care was superfluous. The locks around the chin and temples quivered no more; all was now over, the honest shepherd had ceased to live.

A shudder went through my soul ; I took the child by the hand, and led her to our home. Afterwards I learnt that the poor child was an orphan, sent hither from a distant village, where her grandfather still lived, who should have released the parish from the obligation of bringing her up. This duty we now undertook, and never regretted it, till the day that her absence so wounded our hearts ; then I thought if I had never seen her, I should not now have to bewail her. But I only punished myself with such thoughts ; and so severe, Benjamin, were thy father's reproofs, that I shed almost as many tears on their account as for our loss. However, I did not long remain idle ; I searched and inquired, hither and thither, promising thanks and reward to any one who would give me intelligence, but none I gained, more than I already knew.

The fair maiden had not, in truth, bloomed unobserved upon our mountains ; and Anna was obliged for weeks together to keep within the threshold, from fear of a tall, slim, sallow captain of Dragoons, who followed her about at every step. At last her tormentor left the neighbourhood ; and in order, after so much disquiet, to give the poor child some recreation, thy father took her with him on a journey to the neighbouring city. He took her with him, Benjamin, but he did not bring her back."

Thus she ended ; sighing deeply at the painful remembrance.

Her son, who had listened with fixed attention to the end of her story, now asked impatiently how it had happened, and what had befallen his father, that he so lost the object of his care. But his mother could tell him no more than that both had arrived together at the harbour, and there saw the merchantmen lying at anchor. His father described to the observant maiden the pleasures of a sea-voyage, and the intercourse of various nations. Anna listened to him very attentively, and remained constantly by his side. But it happened that some negro boys, belonging to the ships, sprang ashore, thereby causing a tumult and outcry among the children of the town. The throng and pressure became so great that each one was obliged to stop and look before him. At this moment the pastor, for Anna's better protection, grasped her hand ; but he suddenly lost her, and she vanished from his sight. He called her, he cried aloud, and worked his way after her through the crowd ; but all in vain, she was lost.

"Unaccountable!" replied Benjamin, deep in thought, and meditating on the incident; while his mother, already diverted to another subject by the approach of the nimble Martha, was attentively watching whether, to-day, no joyful message should be brought to her.

"Now surely!" she exclaimed, "old Martha is passing us by. Ah! I thought the days of good fortune had long since gone from us. On our night no joyful ray is to shine, Benjamin!" she added with suppressed voice, amid stifled tears. "Thy father's books from the reading-club are all that she is giving in such haste to the maid; nothing else, nothing for us!"

"What else dost thou expect?" inquired her husband, now entering, as he set down on the table his lamp, which, as it was dark, he had carried in his hand; at the same time, with a countenance unusually bright and joyful, approaching her.

"Ah nothing," she replied, with an air cold and constrained. She avoided looking at him, from fear of betraying the involuntary emotions of her heart; she therefore rose from her seat, and pushed the spinning-wheel, with more than needful precision, into its place.

"Nothing!" he repeated calmly. "Now I know that thou wert looking out upon the road towards some one."

"That was only a thought," she replied.

"But thoughts have their foundation," he smiled. "They come to us not for nothing and in vain. I venture to think that the Holy Eve has also hallowed thy heart, and that pious images, full of happy fulfilment, have arisen upon thy soul." The excited and agitated woman here held her apron to her eyes, and wept vehemently, without having power to answer, though she wished to do so. Sympathizingly, her husband seized her hand. For a while he was silent, as if he wished for time to collect himself; then, gently rebuking, he said, "Oh, if you would only have confidence in God!" She let fall the apron from her eyes, raised them towards heaven, and exclaimed with conscious agony, "Oh, I have held fast, and still hold fast my trust. But —"

"But what?" inquired he, earnestly.

She heeded him not, but continued passionately, "I am not unbelieving. No! I do not doubt God's almighty power. But he

will pardon his weak creature, who, amid the pressure of accumulated trials, groans, and sorrows, would rather close her eyes than vainly task them to discover some ray of hope. And if thou wilt not pity me" she added with bitter tears—"me, poor old woman, to whom everything fails, and on the day when the child in the cradle is joyful, have no joy, because I can prepare none for others; yet is my grief seen by One above, who reckons tears and sighs, and will dry the wet eyes and heal the broken heart." Here she sat down exhausted, leaning her head on the shoulder of her son, who struggling amid sympathy and embarrassment at the painful scene, repeatedly pressed her hand, without mingling in the conversation.

"Strange!" resumed the husband; "thou hast hope in this Great Comforter, and nevertheless thou doubtst! And as he spoke, his countenance reflected a confidence which, besides the heavenly, bespoke the fulfilment of an earthly promise Benjamin now regarded him attentively, while his mother also was involuntarily excited and restless. "I do not, however, well perceive," resumed his father, after a short pause, "what it is that just now so untunes thy mind for the holy festival, unless it be the dream of which thou spakest to me this morning, and which deluded thy imagination with expectations that thou now findest unfulfilled. Didst thou not see a Christmas-tree, with numerous lights and varied many flowers, suddenly standing amidst thy old house-furniture, our children's cradle and their broken toys? and, on awaking, didst thou not find tears of joy in thine eyes?" His wife here nodded assent, for great inward emotion made her unable to speak. "Now wert thou not thinking," he smiled good-humouredly, "of some unexpected good fortune, and that Martha would bring the happy intelligence by the post?" Here he paused as if awaiting her answer; but, as she was silent, he proceeded: "Dreams are most commonly intended as a trial; they are the thermometer of a right faith; they are generally adhered to with a strange tenacity, while one seeks for something behind them, and forgets the power that is almighty. But, to spare the distressed heart of the afflicted wife, he took her fervently by the hand, saying, "Forgive me, if to cause you a surprise, I have hitherto been silent as to what will give you joy." She stared at him incredulously, and

scarcely comprehended him, as he now said, "Martha has, however, brought something with her. God chooses his messengers where and how he will. Only be comforted; the Christmas-tree is already lighted! come with me and see it."

She had mechanically followed him into the middle of the room; now, however, she suddenly stopped, while doubt and expectation were pictured in her countenance. Mistrustfully smiling, she said, as she drew her arm away from her husband's, "Pray go; thou art jesting with me, or else thou hast some design, in order to mortify me."

"God forbid!" exclaimed he, letting fall his folded hands in astonishment. "Why has thy heart become so tenacious of suspicion, and so stubborn against the kindness of God, that with this promise thou thinkest only of an unseemly jest, or of harsh self-willedness? Only look at me. Thy glance is become uncertain. Thou seest things unfairly and anxiously. I pray thee, only look at me calmly, and see if there is in my eyes aught else than a joyful heart."

She made no reply, and willingly allowed herself to be led to the door; yet her timid step and convulsive movement showed her anxious and ill at ease, and that she only watched an opportunity in order to turn back. As she now met the maid at the threshold, who was waiting with the lantern, Benjamin, by his father's desire, threw over her shoulders her thin, time-worn, fur-mantle. They then crossed the court-yard on to the road; while his mother, seized by a strange imagination and inwardly trembling, clung faster to her husband's arm.

"Great God!" her lips ejaculated, "art thou leading us then to the church-yard?"

"Hard by," was the short answer, which in the gloom sounded to her as that of a spectre, and caused a crowd of bewildering images to rush through her mind. The maid now, at her master's bidding, held the lantern a little higher; thereby the darkness was somewhat interrupted, but where the light shone not, only made darker. Every object around, as the church, the tower, and the trees, all appeared larger through the gloom.

"This is a frightful path!" groaned the lady.

"Look forward!" replied her husband; "we are now crossing the bridge, and going up the hill."

"What!" she cried, indignantly, "art thou leading us amid rubbish and ruins to the place of desolation, and deluding our senses with the dazzling lights of Christmas? For Heaven's sake! let us go no further!" she vehemently added, in the high excitement of her feelings, and with a gesture of aversion.

Benjamin, who was also perplexed, hesitated to follow his father.

"I tell you," exclaimed the latter, almost scolding, "there is no cause for doubt. Have you forgotten the five baskets with bread and the few fishes, for the thousands of believers on the mountains? Come, come! I promise you that to-day you shall yet be ashamed of your cowardice!"

So he led her on till they came to the dwelling of the deceased shepherd, David. As they now stood before the latched door, and her husband knocked, his wife listened to a secret whispering inside, whilst she followed the motion of the many lights, whose flickering flame glimmered through the chinks of the dilapidated wall. Meanwhile, she had no time to give utterance to her joy and wonder, for soon far different objects arrested her attention. On the door now being opened, they entered, and a fragrant odour of the yew-tree, of spiced cakes and Christmas candles came floating towards them, with all the charm of the sweet, dear days of childhood. A glare, as of a thousand stars, filled the little apartment, so that nothing was distinguishable but the flitting to and fro of a young, beautiful lady, who like a kind fairy, in the midst of a narrow circle closed around her, was distributing her gifts, great and small, and acknowledging with angel-tones the thanks and greetings of the little ones.

"Anna! my Anna!" cried the wife, at the first sound of the long missed voice; and hastily disengaging her arm from her husband, clasped her dear foster-daughter to her heart.

"Art thou my child—art thou?" she inquired repeatedly, glancing at the noble beauty of the stranger's countenance. Then scrutinising the refined features, the taller stature, the noble carriage, the richness of a gold chain, and the rings on her delicate fingers; "art thou really she?" she again inquired.

The maiden, who with difficulty suppressed her tears, nodded assent; and in order to check the overpowering emotion, led her foster-parents and youthful friend to the Christmas-tree, which was standing in the middle of the room, surrounded with all that the provident daughter had been able to procure for their entertainment and delight. There lay baskets and caskets, with articles of clothing, fine linen, rich furs, costly works ecclesiastical and secular, and the finest flax, for the busy hands of her friend. She likewise received a handsome red leather-purse, in which, as she curiously opened it, she found a considerable sum, with this express designation—"For the care of the sickly son."

"Child! my dear child!" stammered the overpowered, astonished woman; "art thou so rich? and are they good spirits that I have to thank?" As she said this, she glanced, somewhat furtively, at two dark-complexioned boys, who in their fire-coloured loose garments and coral ornaments, were, with strangely anxious looks, straying amid the lights, and especially towards the fruits and sweets and toys for the children.

"Be tranquil, my love," said the husband, calming the solicitude of his wife; "I know, and will in due time inform thee of all. For the present, delight thyself undisturbed, and let no anxious thoughts sully thy joys."

"I do rejoice," she replied, sitting down. "Certainly, I very much rejoice. But Anna, whence comest thou? and where hast thou been? If all were magic, and thou a fairy-queen or child of the fays"—

"Dear mother!" Anna interrupted her, smiling; "we know not what great things God can do. His wonders ever seem to us magic."

"Right, my daughter," assented the foster father. "We take away the honour from Him to whom it belongs; and whilst we doubt in Him, we give to folly and superstition a broad access to our reason. Do not be foolish," he admonished his reddening spouse, familiarly laying his hand on her shoulder. "Thou wilt also bethink thyself, when thy mind is again in its right position, and there will then be no place but for thanks and praise."

Benjamin, who meanwhile had contemplated with restless sympathy the strange and yet to his recollection familiar form of the

young angel, as she really seemed to him, now asked whether all along Anna had not invisibly been hovering around, in order to be acquainted with their joys and sorrows ; and now, to gratify their heartfelt longings, had returned to them in all her former truth and reality.

She warmly replied, that ever since her return to her father-land, it had been the sole aim of her life to inform herself of the fortunes of her never-to-be-forgotten benefactors ; for whose sake, alone, she had gone the long distance over the sea.

“Over the sea ?” asked the wife, as if recoiling in terror at the monstrous idea. “There, where the men are of another complexion, and the sun stands still day and night—hast thou been there, Anna ? What villain has kept thee so long a captive ?”

“Nothing : nothing about it to-day,” interposed her husband. “Let it suffice that she is here. And let us be calm to hear the recital.”

“Ah !” replied his wife, “I think thou art well instructed, and mayest easily exercise patience ; for, if I err not, Martha brought thee, on the last post-day, a letter containing what we most desired. Since then thou hast been, as it were, inverted ; and little prophetic gift was needed to foresee some revolution in our wheel of fortune. Thou needst not dissemble, old man :” she laughed slyly, “and I was only vexed that thou wouldst not explain thyself.”

“So, so !” remarked he, smiling ; “whence, then, the dream, the impatience, and the discord ? But come, children,” he continued ; “it was Anna’s desire to greet us at her grandfather’s dilapidated hearth ; and to the fulfilment of this her earnest wish, I have, according to my ability, with Martha’s assistance, laboured in secret. But now she shall be once more at home by our fireside : so conduct her after me. Thou, my son Benjamin, bring again our daughter into our house.”

Here he beckoned the youth with his young companion to follow him ; whilst he, supporting the too happy mother, prepared to leave the hut. But she once more cast a glance behind her, and forced him also to look back ; at the same time saying, “It was here, upon this spot, that I first found the dear heart ; and here, also, as from the night of oblivion, has she returned

to us. I know not how it happened, nor can I trace the connexion, but this little hut has become to me as a temple that has shewed me life and death, and through both has exalted my soul. There," she continued, thoughtfully, pointing with extended hand towards the illuminated table, "there stood old David's dying bed. The shepherd's wallet and staff, with the faded ribbon which Anna's grandmother gave to her young love, are resting with him under the earth. Now, garlands of fresh evergreen are hanging on the vacant spot. All has become new," she added, gratefully, clasping her hands.

"Also thy faith," whispered her husband, "let it never more slumber or die," besought he, calmly pressing her to his bosom. They were soon quietly seated around the arm-chair of the good housewife, who had set out on the large dinner-table all her stores, her glance now attracted by the gifts, now by the giver; her provident mind already busy in thought, with cutting up the linen and stuffs for the wants of herself and household, with counting over the large sum of money, whereby she saw her beloved son restored to vigour and comfort. The old man, who was reclining at his ease, broke silence, by saying—"Now, dear daughter, let thy mother also know the story of the past, and so let all mystery be solved."

Anna, as if struck by a sudden pain, dropped her eyelids, and was unable immediately to find words for the recital.

Benjamin perceived what was passing in her mind, and as he had already obtained the wished-for intelligence from his young friend, he replied to his father, "Let us spare the fatigued one the superfluous exertion. You have a letter from Anna, and I know her writing is beautiful and clear. The lines contain quite enough to make us content."

"Art thou so satisfied?" said his father, laughing, or—now I guess thou needest to learn nothing further; but thy mother shall hear the story from my lips. The dear maiden, at the moment when I last perceived her, saw her pursuer, the captain of dragoons, amid the crowd, approaching her. In her anxiety, she sprang aside among the negro-boys, and seeking safety behind them, was hidden as under a dark cloud. It was no contrivance, nor purpose, but the working of terror that prompted her. In her anguish she fol-

lowed the troop, which last was lost among the throng. But the falcon, who had got her too well in his eye again to lose sight of her, pierced through the dark maze in which she was entangled; and the lads being overawed by his soldierly appearance, his threats and reproaches, he was on the point of seizing the trembling maiden, when the negroes, piping aloud, called an old man, with white hair, and firm, commanding aspect, to her assistance. 'This was the ship-master, who, viewing with rising indignation the danger of the young, excited child, now hastened to her rescue. 'Back!' he exclaimed, as Anna unconsciously sank into his arms, fast clinging to him; 'back! I will defend the helpless one with my last drop of blood.' In vain the captain endeavoured to make good his claim to Anna with boasting words of falsehood; in vain he swore to be revenged of such resistance. The old navigator remained unshaken, and, as at last the foaming Frenchman, availing himself of his military dignity, gave orders to summon the watch, Anna's protector drew his short broad sabre, which hung at his side, resolved rather to make the last venture than expose innocence to insult. By this defensive attitude he covered her retreat, while the nimble blacks bore the stranger maiden to the ship, whither he slowly and thoughtfully followed her."

"God be praised!" cried the pastor's wife, ardently embracing her foster-child, as if she now saw her rescued from the threatened misfortune.

"Do not rejoice too soon," admonished her husband. "In the sphere where no one commanded but that brave old man, she was indeed secure from the dragoon captain, but Heaven willed for her yet another trial; for just as the ship was ready for departure, unfavourable winds, and other untoward circumstances, caused a further delay before weighing anchor. Then it sped away into the sea, and when Anna awoke from her swoon, she found herself surrounded by black and white servants, and reclining upon a couch in the most commodious part of the cabin, comprehending no more than if she were dreaming, and realizing the forgotten images of her childish imagination."

"What!" cried the wife, interrupting her husband, "did he take her with him into a strange country? So the last event

was worse than the first. Wherefore, then, before didst thou praise the hateful sea-robber?"

"Dear mother," said Anna, appeasing her wrath, "do you blame the brave, though somewhat despotic man, who, old, lonely, and childless, was returning from his last voyage, more dreading a useless, sickly old age, than even death? He considered that he had won my gratitude, and had bound me by perpetual obligation. A daughter, a cherisher, the child of his choice he saw in me. 'Thou canst have no heart within thee,' he often said, 'if thou lovest not thy deliverer. Thou hast no parents, and one foster-father is as good as another. None can do more for thee than I have.'"

"Nor was he, in his way, so very wrong," observed the old man; "certain it is, he meant well, and he did well. Like a princess has our child lived in her splendid palace at Calcutta. The lustre of immense riches surrounded her. Everything she had, except news from her home; for it is more than probable that none of Anna's letters found their way over the ocean. It was only the death of the rich factor that loosed her golden fetters. Now that he was obliged to forego her presence, he no longer opposed her return to this continent. By his will, wherein he had named her as his heiress, he had ordered everything needful for her voyage, and suitable accommodation. And now she is here," after a short pause; "for the rest God will provide."

And he proceeded still further in the same kindly strain as he had begun. Anna built upon the spot where stood old David's hut a handsome, commodious mansion; and when the next returning festival demanded of the good village fairy a Christmas tree, it illumined the friendly hall of the new habitation, which, led by Benjamin's hand, she that hallowed evening entered, thenceforth not less a happy wife than a pious daughter.

THE

Revolutionists.



EVERY event has its time—so had the French revolution. Wherever wilfulness breaks through the law it gives something to see and to experience. In one respect the whole world is a nation : people assemble from all quarters, and join themselves to each other, in order to share in what is newest. The prelude, even the early scenes of that bloody catastrophe, corrupted the unprejudiced mind that did not suspect the evil that lay behind. With quite incredible simplicity, people ran to the fire, only to see it burn. One drama like the other expands, agitates, and terminates in the accustomed manner. It was for this reason that many travellers now met together on the way to France.

On a December night, more disagreeable than inclement, in the year 1790, a close-shut travelling-carriage was proceeding on the road from Mayence to Strasburg; the post-horses were going forward at a brisk trot. Well-kept roads left all the fewer hindrances to be expected ; and two bright lanterns from the coach-box threw down a distinct circle of light upon the ground. The more startling was it that, on a sudden, the horses pranced aside, and the postilion with difficulty kept himself and the carriage on the balance. The matter did not subside without much cursing and outcry, in which the servant, descending angrily from his elevated seat, joined in full voice; with this difference, however, that he, in

his wrath, gave back to the driver the abuse which the latter let forth upon his horses. Owing to the noise thus occasioned, a young, handsome man, within the carriage, drew his chin from under a large over-lapping fur cloak, and knocking repeatedly at the front window, without opening it, asked, as they were now stopping, what was the matter outside. The postilion had, in the meantime, dismounted; and just as his master was directing to him the question, exclaimed—"What! a cabriolet in front, overturned in the middle of the road! The horse with the broken-off pole, must have run away! Whoever sat there must indeed have had a pretty fall!"

"Open! Paul, open the door immediately!" was the cry from out the unclosed coach window. "Perhaps those poor people are losing their way, looking about here after the horse, and we can help them."

Paul, who was already at the carriage, standing uncovered, and turning the handle of the door, reminded his gracious master, at the same time, that it was cold, damp, unpleasant weather; that his trouble would be fruitless, and that this delay on the road would greatly retard their arrival at Strasburg.

"What is that to me?" replied his master. "Open!"

"Keep your seat," counselled the postilion, who in the meantime had more closely examined the remains of the damaged vehicle; "keep your seat! it is dark as the grave all around; one sees only so far as the lamps throw a light. The unfortunates in the thing there will surely have been wise enough not to hunt after the beast in such darkness; that would avail nothing. Probably they have taken their luggage, and gone on, on foot. The carriage is empty; this small chest and an article of clothing, are all that they have left." With these words he handed a lady's folded silk mantle into the carriage, pushing after it the flat leather-covered trunk, and adding—"At the next station we may probably obtain information as to the owners."

Uneasy at having this strange package by him in the carriage, the young man, whom Paul styled "Herr Colonel," drew himself further into the corner, and yielding, not altogether unwillingly, to the reasoning of the postilion, desired him only to be mindful that they got forward. In an instant, they were again in motion. They

made their journey still more quickly than before; it was as if the short disturbance had made them all the more lively, and had taken away from them the heaviness of the night. The postilion piped and sang alternately; Paul, who was, as well as the other, a native of Alsace, accorded with the custom of his people. The Colonel could not sleep, but kept rocking himself to and fro; whilst doing this, he observed that a strong vapour of tuberose filled the carriage. He searched in every pocket, lest haply a small case containing this perfume had accidentally opened. In feeling and grasping about, he caught the mantle in his hands; as he moved it the odour became stronger. Thereupon, astonished and curious, he drew it nearer towards the light; and looked, as if questioning, at it. The black sarcenet, with inlaid wadding, and bordered with lace of the same colour, was new, fashionably made; the collar above adapted for the slenderest, most delicate neck. Involuntarily the young traveller let the ties which attached the folds together glide over his fingers, which caused a crowd of undefined images to rush through his mind. Smiling, he carefully laid aside the elegant covering of an unknown, perhaps beautiful form, resolving as soon as possible to rid himself of it, as also of the chest. This latter was about six inches deep, and a foot in diameter; a yellow metal plate concealed the lock, which seemed artfully wrought, and only to be opened by a peculiar kind of key. The nearness of that strange object caused the Colonel much disquiet; and scarcely had he arrived at the next station than his first word was to inquire after the travellers in the cabriolet. He caused the postilion to describe it in the most precise manner, then he exhibited the mantle which one of the persons who sat in the vehicle must have worn, in order to give a clue to their recollection of the persons; in short, he neglected no means of gaining light upon the subject, and of affording to those, of whom, notwithstanding all his trouble, he could find no trace, the prospect of recovering their property.

With this special view he left with the postmaster a card with the name—"Count Victor Medjerski, Colonel of a Polish regiment of lancers," and added on the back, in pencil, "remains three days in Strasburg, at the White Hotel, and in case, by that time, no inquiry is made after them, will deliver the found articles to the tribunal at Strasburg, to await the

claim of the rightful owners." This done, he went on to the next change of horses, where he directed the same inquiries, and left behind the same directions, but with as little success. He repeated this, with increasing disquietude, up to the barriers of Strasburg, where he at length arrived early in the morning, fatigued, cold, and out of humour. He was surprised, on entering his chamber, to find that he had involuntarily relieved the waiters of the trouble of carrying up the little black portmanteau. He bore it under his arm, and as he was now about to place it aside, he discovered that, lost as he was in thought, the mantle also, hidden between the folds of his cloak, was trailing around him. Almost ashamed, he cast both aside, and his cloak upon them.

A city, such as that in which he now found himself, at so excited a period, could not fail, by the influx of foreigners, to occupy his attention speedily in other ways. The political condition of the country was that especially which had drawn the Polish colonel hither. Partly from his own impulse, partly in the interest of a popular party, he had undertaken the journey. Wealth, activity, acuteness, with a combination of other fine qualities, rendered the ardent youth adapted for observation, and the more so as nature and habit had endowed his exterior with an air of dreamy indolence, which, while it disarmed the circumspection of others, gave full scope to the exercise of this quality in himself. He therefore threw himself carelessly into the tumult of coffee-houses and theatres, in order that he afterwards might be able to collect his thoughts at the more temperate discussions of the hotel table. The decree of the 27th November, against the priests who refused the oath, held for the moment all eyes in stedfast gaze at what should be the result of so decisive a procedure. If the example of great and exalted firmness on the one side, quickened hope and courage, so, on the other, thoughtless wit sharpened its scornful darts, infidelity and wild projects of liberty their bitter hatred against the venerable victims of the new era. Wondering and anxious, the former party beheld the king; the latter watchfully followed on his steps. He had declared himself against the apostates, and had taken the persecuted under his protection.

All this enkindled the minds of the revolutionists. The newest Parisian journals passed with wild haste from hand to hand; loud

was the contention thereupon, and not seldom an empty dogmatism brought one and another's written or spoken words to a bloody test. So excited by one folly after another, the revolution raged in the maddest manner among its adherents. Count Medjerski regarded with increasing earnestness the astonishing effects of the moral disorder; he felt disposed to have no judgment in the matter. Nevertheless, however, there were too many kindred elements at work among the youth of those days for the daring mind of the Pole not to be flushed; for his heart was taught to beat more quickly at the name of liberty. More excited than usual with much that he had heard at the table, and what he himself had there spoken, he was pacing, on the second night of his abode at Strasburg, amid rising projects and proud expectations, up and down his chamber. His heart was full, his blood was warm; the more as a lively exclamation escaped his lips, accompanied, too, by a vehement motion of his hands and arms. In such agitation he came, at a turn, upon something that, by a rustling noise, bespoke its nearness. The sound went thrilling through his soul. He stopped, looked up, and glanced at the taffeta mantle, which was hanging at its full length from a beam in the wainscoting, and which seemed, with its long-flowing, swelling folds, to encompass a human form. The Colonel started. He had, amid the whirl of other weightier subjects, forgotten the accidental occurrence. Involuntarily he advanced again with outstretched finger towards the silken stuff, as if he wished to try whether that sound had arisen from the former contact. The effect was naturally the same. "Hem!" thought he, "dost thou urge me to a new investigation? It is true that I have as good as forgotten the whole matter; perhaps I had here been more fortunate in my endeavours." He now seriously resolved on the morrow to try once more, whether in some way the right clue could not be found. Besides, it was the last day of his sojourn at this place, and consequently the extreme term which he had fixed for returning the found articles. Thenceforward, the owners, if such should appear, would have to do with the magistrate.

When a strange and sudden thought perplexes us, by intruding into another circle of ideas, we are inevitably cast upon the double struggle of retaining our vanishing impressions, as well as of grasping those which have intervened; the combination throws us

from our balance, and not seldom we fall into a feverish excitement, which unnaturally heightens the occurrence, and gives to it in these circumstances a painful dominion over the imagination. Such was the Count's discomposure, on the flight of his bold plans of freedom, at the sight of the mantle, as he felt it impossible to disentangle himself from the strange mixture of secret forebodings which seemed invisibly to hang thereon. He walked repeatedly up and down his chamber, rubbed his forehead with his hand, and at length seated himself fatigued upon the bed, his head leaning upon his up-raised arm, his gaze fixed upon the portmanteau over against him. He did not directly fall asleep; meanwhile slumber approached him, in that sweet, perplexing, half-annulling of consciousness which, while it gives no power to dreams, yet envelopes the senses with the flocking clouds of night. In this twilight of the soul he thought he saw a beautiful slender form, dazzling white, with long, fair hair, and overhanging green veil, glide out of the casket and array itself in the folding mantle; the charming figure waved to and fro, as a flower agitated by the wind; at the same time he inhaled a strong odour of tuberoses. Whilst he was wondering, he discovered that what he had previously taken for a delicate maiden was a chalice-flower, with a long stem, exactly resembling a tuberoses; only of larger dimensions. He felt at the moment an inward sensation, as if falling from a height; he looked around with astonished gaze, and, still somewhat confused with the weariness of his first slumber, was terrified at the inexplicable illusion. Scarcely had he risen and collected himself than he sought to unravel the strange vision.

When, at mid-day, he went to the dining-hall, he met two ladies on the staircase; one of whom was aged, of dark countenance and expressive features, and who, accompanied by a youthful beauty, advanced with short and hasty steps before him. The long, blonde hair of the delicate creature, whom he took for the daughter of the elder, covered, after the fashion of the time, half way down the back; and then again, in all its fulness and beauty, was gathered up and fastened on the top: the little straw hat, with green veil, which was placed rather aside and in front of the countenance, concealed scarcely anything of the luxuriance behind. The Colonel, who followed the ladies, had in this manner full opportunity to admire the handsome figure and head-tire of the younger. While

the latter stopped, and turned to adjust the dress of her companion, there met his gaze the soft features of the most delicately marked profile that he had ever beheld: he also paused involuntarily awaiting their further progress. Both seemed, however, to have a similar intention; at least, it was evident that it was not without some embarrassment that they hesitated in their further descent. To avoid the appearance of rudeness, the Count was obliged to go forward; he did so, and proffering a salutation, hurried by them; he accompanied the hasty movement only by a furtive glance at the fair, gentle, blushing maiden, whose downcast look and attitude bespoke the expression of tranquil sorrow. Amid a strange mixture of sympathy and, what seemed to him like recollection, he paced the dinner-chamber, unconscious how the latter feeling had possessed him, as he reflected that it was the perfume of tuberose which the ladies accidentally carried, that had here recalled to him the little adventure of his journey. For a moment he thought that, perchance, he had now met with the owners of his burdensome treasure: he resolved to make further inquiries; and, in the first place, to give his skilful servant, Paul, the needful instructions for that purpose. Subsequently, however, many weightier matters intervened; especially a more intimate acquaintance with a Frenchman of distinction, who had sacrificed name and station for the young story of a new era, and had declared himself as a champion of liberty. The interesting disclosures which the quondam duke and peer of the realm was enabled to make, drew him off from all else that went on around him; so that it was only as it were by mere accident that the matter again occurred to him.

Once aroused, however, and more affected by what had occurred than was his wont, he could scarcely await the morrow, which should afford him some means and opportunity for a decisive step; besides, it was really possible that the unknown ladies, whose accidental meeting now seemed to him so significant, might be the travellers in the cabriolet! What if they had hitherto followed him, and, from timidity or other considerations, shunned to make themselves known to a stranger! If all had not deceived him, the earnest, sharp eyes of the elder had been scrutinizingly fixed upon him when all three stood on the staircase, and still rested on him when he, on entering the hall, as if accidentally,

looked backward. Unaccountable! he now thought, that this had not at once occurred to him, and that he had not at the same moment used the occasion to obtain some information. But who were the two, and what the cause of their timid shyness? He had dark conjectures, which yet he expressed all the less distinctly, as his interest for the fair, gentle maiden, assumed ever a more defined form; and he felt, with each passing hour of the night, a more lively impatience to seek after her. It might have been about three o'clock in the morning, when the lock of a door in an adjoining room was gently turned. The Colonel went forward a step; this somewhat increased the noise. "Who is there?" he cried with full-toned voice. The door opened as silently as if touched by a zephyr's whisper.

"Hush!" said some one in a strange under-tone; "hush! we are both alone, and it is for me to break silence. At last I must speak."

The Count looked astonished and annoyed at the little, pale, haggard man, who rudely pressed towards him, and with an air of the most remarkable coolness approached him more closely. A little high and proud, as was natural to his character, he thereupon replied, stopping the other's way, "Who are you, sir? and what would you of me at this inconvenient hour, in so secret a manner?"

"The first question," retorted the other, "is, between us, of no importance; as to the second you will be in no doubt, when I announce myself as the owner of the small trifles upon which, on your journey, you had the goodness to bestow some attention."

"You the owner?" asked the Colonel, astonished.

"As I have had the honour to tell you," was the decisive answer.

The former, to whom it only now occurred that he had not acted with due circumspection, in offering the articles without further conditions, remarked, with a slight trace of scorn upon his lips, that he might be pardoned should he hesitate to accede to a demand so proposed. "Unquestionably, sir," he added, "you will be candid enough to see that there is still some other proof required to induce me to return what, as the property of a stranger, I am not authorized to pass lightly from my hand."

The stranger stood with his arms folded, in a negligent attitude, and looking about him with an air of indifference, exclaimed,

shrugging his shoulders, "Bah! how many useless ceremonies about such trifles. From your haste to be rid of the things, I had not expected this punctiliousness."

"It needs not offend you," replied Count Medjerski, "if, through your interposition, I first recognised my own thoughtlessness."

"Ah!" cried the stranger, quickly raising his head; yet, as bethinking himself, adding with jovial irony, "yes, truly, my way of making visits has something striking in it; meanwhile, however this may be, here I am. After all, you cannot but trust me as well as any other person who may ask you for a little black chest with yellow metal plate, and a lady's mantle, both of which you have exhibited at all the stations, enough to authorize numberless similar applications. I was curious as to your proof of the validity of the claim."

The Colonel, irritated at the light scorn that made him feel his want of deliberation, did not reflect a moment, but fixing his eyes sharply and firmly on his unwelcome visitor, rejoined, "The proof, sir, lies in the possession of the key belonging to the chest; so soon as this is opened before me, I am quite ready to surrender my rights."

"Hem!" replied the stranger thoughtfully. "And if the key should be lost, and the owner unable to comply with your demand?"

"Well, then indeed," hastily interrupted the other, "the chest must be forcibly opened, and the claim to its contents be justified by the owner first describing them, his statement being verified by the inspection."

Here the stranger, in visible emotion, retreated a step, and stretching himself up in height towards the youth, with the strangest expression of pride and embarrassment, inquired, "How? could you make that demand?"

"And why not?" was the confident answer.

"Why not?" replied the former vehemently. "And if, through an unnecessary curiosity, you should drag some precious secret into light, heap insult and reproach upon more than one unpolluted head, and for the sake of an untimely conscientiousness should expose your own conscience to far bitterer struggles? Young man," he added, with increasing warmth, "young man, human rights, like everything upon earth, have their Janus-face; the Divine Word

alone is single. It tells us, 'Love thy neighbour as thyself.' Can you love without confiding? And what entitles you, after this command, to harbour greater suspicion against me than against yourself? In times like the present, an action, an event, the conduct of a man, often looks quite otherwise than as he is inwardly disposed. My nocturnal surprise may astonish you; but why explain it in the most invidious manner?"

"Not that, sir," said the Count, interrupting him; "but I abide by the sense of your own words. In a time like the present, one should neither be deterred nor yet deceived by outward appearances. It may be that, through overhastiness, I have, in other ways, placed persons in a painful perplexity, who have more reason to claim my circumspection than you have. I must, therefore, require that you will allow the condition just proposed to hold good. You will not, by this, expose your secret, if such exists, to any further indiscretion; for I pledge my honour to observe the deepest silence, as to what may be the contents of the little chest."

"If a word of honour is here of any avail," exclaimed the stranger, angrily, "I can demand for mine as much regard as you for yours. But, distrust against distrust! I have no wish to enter into stipulations, and am resolved, at any cost, to get possession of my property, and stake my life upon the game. Therefore, sir," he continued, after a momentary silence, "I give you four-and-twenty hours for reflection. To-morrow night, about his hour, I shall inquire your resolution; and, should you remain in your present mind, to determine immediately on the weapons, among which you may then decide."

It seemed, at this moment, as if a third person said something. At least the Count thought he heard another voice besides that of the one who stood before him. He therefore looked around, and meanwhile the other left the room. The door sprang silently into the lock. Nothing afterwards betrayed the nearness of a living being. The incident was most mysterious. The Colonel's sensibilities were vividly excited, yet he saw no way out of the labyrinth. Perhaps, at first, he had been too scrupulous as to the delivery of the strange articles; but after the turn the discussion had taken, he could not be a hair's breadth more yielding. The necessity for thus acting was evident. With this he

had been able to content himself; but the danger of lying under a misinterpretation troubled him with the most painful uncertainty, whether he should not avoid the unequal contest with a probably much-oppressed man, and adopt a middle course to solve the misunderstanding. Innumerable were the conflicting thoughts that strove within him. Vexed at having met with so embarrassing an adventure, which had, besides, a romantic and ridiculous aspect, he wished rather to think no more of it; and throwing himself on the bed, fell asleep till the bright morning.

The cheerful flame on the hearth, at which the house-servant was busy laying on wood, awoke him in an agreeable manner. He looked up enlivened, and as everything now seemed to him more natural and intelligible than during the night, his blood flowed more tranquilly, and the warm glow of the room banishing thence all evil spirits, he saw in the somewhat ghostly visit only a piece of cunning knavery—in him who practised it an adventurer—in the duel an intimidation. Thus determined, he laughed out boldly, as he thought, at the high words, and the ill-concealed disquiet with which they were uttered. The more he contemplated the diminutive man in the coloured hues which the day-light reflected, the more he discovered in him what was improbable and fictitious. It was, therefore, with no particular interest that he inquired of the youth at the fire-place, who might be the occupant of the adjoining room.

The lad looked at him, and, with an air as if doubting the question, repeated, "Who occupies the adjoining room?"

Whereupon the Colonel nodding assent, the other, shaking his head, assured him that for four days it had stood empty.

"Thou art mistaken," was the reply; "only last night I heard a noise in it!"

The youth, laughing, persisted in his assurance, and proposed, in order to be quite clear on the matter, that the butler—who just then was passing—should unlock the door, and let the gentleman be convinced by his own eyesight.

Count Medjerski, willing to be satisfied, called to the butler, who thereupon came in. The door being opened, showed a room quite empty, and which, for a long time, had to all appearance remained unoccupied.

"Incomprehensible!" said the Count, on entering; "I could

have sworn"—and he cast a scrutinising glance around without saying anything further.

The familiar odour of tuberose, which like something supernatural floated towards him, bewildered his thoughts. He turned away so perplexed, that on the butler triumphantly saying, "You see now, sir!" he made no answer; and left the two laughing between themselves at his error.

"Intolerable!" said he, throwing himself into an elbow-chair by the fire-side; "What mean these fooleries and mummeries? To me they are ill applied. Nothing is so distasteful to me as such stage-tricks!"

Meanwhile, it appeared as if fate would try his patience with more such tests; for now, just as loud discontent and secret longings divided his mind, a repeated knocking at the door aroused him to a disquiet for which he could scarcely excuse himself. Yet he remained silent, as Paul was not present; and the concourse in taverns, as everywhere, so also here, was insupportable. But this kind of denial would not do. Without further inquiry there entered a man, having on his head a round basket with apples and other winter fruits, and making with both his vacant hands a variety of strange and unintelligible signs, after the manner of deaf and dumb persons.

The Count, who felt within the strife of sympathy and aversion, did not oppose his entrance. He allowed him to approach nearer, looked at and handled his wares, which he intimated might be placed on an empty dish standing by; after which, the other pocketing the payment, signified with the wild vehemence of impotency, by look, signs, and gesture, what he could not utter. Anxious for his riddance, the Colonel warned him away with his hand, and having turned his back upon him, the unfortunate, with repeated obeisances, took his leave.

"Must not the fresh, smiling fruit, by their alluring glances, invite him to life's enjoyment, who, nevertheless, is excluded from it?" thought Count Medjerski, as he looked sorrowfully after the mute.

He seated himself again in his arm-chair, and played with the apples on the plate. As his fingers glided to and fro, he perceived that he held a billet in his hand, which had been sticking between the fruit. "What is this?" he exclaimed, holding the neatly folded

note closer to his eye. It was directed to himself—"A new Comedy!" He smiled jestingly, uncertain whether he should break the seal. Curiosity, and perhaps another motive, more hidden and dangerous than that, induced him to tear off the envelope, and amid quick heart-throbbings, he read the following:—

"An extraordinary fate demands extraordinary measures. Think here of nothing that happens in the accustomed manner. Let every voice be silenced but that of humanity. This cannot deceive you; and even though it should, yet console yourself with this, that to be so deluded is an honour that outweighs the value of temporal things, there, where we are estimated according to the measure that we mete to others. Listen to the prayer of an unfortunate, whom your obstinacy, sir, threatens to deprive of her last protector. Deliver the articles in question this evening in the twilight, to the dumb man, who will wait at your door until you admit him. I add nothing further. If there be faith and confidence in your soul, they will both prevail; if not, what would avail the assurance that you will only deliver to the rightful owner what belongs to her?"

The Colonel gazed at the fine hand-writing. It was that of a lady, written hastily, yet very distinctly. "Suppose she were so?" thought he. The beautiful form, the downcast eye, the troubled mein! All spoke the recollection to his heart. "And if not," he exclaimed, resolutely, "thy apparition, heavenly being, has once made intercession, whether for thyself or some other! Yes!" he repeated, "I set all other considerations aside; even that of a jealous feeling of honour. Thou sayest, however, unknown being, those warm emotions of the heart will still glow, when the dream of life expires! And what thou sayest"—

Here a noise, outside, in the passage, startled him. He hid the paper in his bosom, and hastily locked mantle and chest in a cupboard, putting the key in his pocket, as the young republican Duke, inquiring after him with a loud voice, entered the room. He held in his hand letters and papers, both of which he threw on the table, and himself into the next chair.

"Truly," he exclaimed, "that sets the crown on the mad tricks! They are actually putting the weapons into the people's hands. Will you believe it? The Count of Provence has fled—the King is making secret preparations to follow him—and the rebel priests are paving his way. In all circumstances and affairs these persons find, under some pretext, the way and means of evasion. No one, in this way or that, is sure of meeting them. Nay, it is possible," he added

hesitatingly, half laughing, half arrested by the fancy, "it is possible that you, my dear Count, with all your outward shew of republican enthusiasm, may be a masked priest, and he secretly pronouncing over me the anathema."

"You are jesting," replied the Count, "with too much bitterness over an order that is equally adverse to your purposes, and opposed to your convictions. You ought rather to honour the firmness which makes every sacrifice to conscience."

"Every sacrifice?" cried the other repeatedly, indignantly starting from his seat. "Oh, you little know to what these men are forcing us. It matters naught to you that family bonds are rent asunder, and the father-land split into manifold dissensions: you have neither family nor father-land. Everywhere is your home, if only you find room for crafty instigations. Me!" he exclaimed, striking his breast with the same vehemence as he spoke the words; "me it is, that their perilous influence robs of life's repose. Therefore, if only I scent the presence of one of your boxes, my blood foams over with effervescing flame."

"I hope it is not my presence," said Medjerski, "that so disconcerts your humour."

"No, Colonel," replied the Duke; "but if all has not deceived me, I have to-day met a very suspicious object quite in the neighbourhood of your chamber, and truly in a singular guise."

"Explain yourself more distinctly," responded the other, drily.

"We will not allow it to be disagreeable," smiled the young Frenchman, at the same time drawing nearer to the table, and taking one of the apples, as he remarked gaily, while eating it, "one cannot now-a-days vouch for anything. Heaven only knows with whom, in such a house as that in which we now are, we may not be dwelling, under the same roof. Indeed, it is possible that even the Count of Provence might be haunting about here in some disguise."

"You take him to be a very strange fellow," said the Colonel, as a dark conjecture flashed upon him, and he felt almost terrified at the undefined thought. This might in some degree have been reflected on his countenance; for the Duke, fixing his eyes upon him, said—

"And you take it very seriously. But come," he added carelessly; "it is time to go to the dinner-table. They have been some

time assembling in the dining-hall, and my purpose in coming was to fetch you."

Here he packed together the papers which he had previously thrown down, and which, in the first excitement of the received intelligence, he had brought with him. As he was arranging them, he put aside one not belonging to the rest. On this he cast only an accidental glance, which sufficed, however, to chase the blood into his cheeks, and then to leave them pale and colourless. Hastily catching at the object of so overpowering an impression, he stammered—

"How do you come by this handwriting? Since when? I pray you, whence? And in what way did you get possession of a letter addressed to you by that hand?"

The Count, who, without any dread of a possible betrayal, had laid on the table, as of no importance, the empty cover of the lately received note, now also changed colour. Disagreeably perplexed by the idea that he might now be involuntarily entangled, either in the secret play of a strange intrigue, or in the fate of persons wholly unknown, he answered, not without a visible effort to collect himself—

"I really regret, sir, that I am unable to give you any information. No one can be more ignorant in the matter than I am, to whom neither recollection nor conjectures afford any probable trace of the author."

"Enough!" said the other, interrupting him; "you wish to be indebted to me for the answer. The entire web of a diabolical artifice lies stretched out before me! But be you assured I will tear it asunder. The traitress who has confided in your protection, is infallibly here. The wafer is still wet, that sealed the delicate note." With these words, he passionately crushed the fateful paper, and then with tremulous voice continued: "You have contrived me for your game! outwitted, scorned—" here his voice failed him; "yet, sir," he exclaimed angrily, "you shall render me an account upon the spot, here in this room, this very moment! I care for nothing more. Only with my life shall you dispute with me the possession of the only property on which I lay any value. Well now," he continued, quite out of himself; "do not long bethink yourself. There are pistols, which, it is to be hoped, are well loaded.

A fortune-hunter," said he, laughing with bitter rage, "may not go upon adventures without such precautions."

"Hold!" cried Count Medjerski, with a calmness that seemed to mock the other's vehement passion; "I have allowed you to finish. I could afford to do so. My name, as my person, is subject to no misinterpretation. You are involved in a singular error; and still more singular is it, that I am not in the least able to convince you of the contrary. Now I should not perhaps wish it," he smiled with constrained mildness, "even were it in my power. As to all else, I am ready to satisfy your demand; only I must beg a few hours' delay, as I have first to adjust a previous affair which still detains me at this place."

"How, sir?" exclaimed the Duke impetuously; "if you have kindled the flame on both sides, and hope to extinguish one fire by means of the other? But be upon your guard! I shall watch you. And if I am obliged to unite against you with my bitterest foe, I will hunt you from your prey."

"We do not understand one another," said the Colonel, coolly; "wherefore more words? May I beg?" he continued, opening the door; "we were going to the dining-hall. I, for my part, feel very hungry."

The Duke stamped with his foot. "At what hour shall I again meet you here?" he asked, with flaming eyes.

"Early to-morrow morning, at seven o'clock," was the answer.

Both now greeted each other with a mute salutation. Medjerski locked the door, and descended the staircase; the other rushed angrily into his room.

Amid the thousand bewildering thoughts that, during the meal-time, sped through the Count's mind, the question arose whether by that seductive thread, he might not become entangled in the subtle plans of the royalist party; and even unconsciously serve as the instrument of their plans. Who was the mysterious little man? Distinguished, repulsive, thoughtful, bold, all bespoke a person of high birth. Perhaps he was one of the retinue of the Count of Provence; perhaps some one high in confidence. But she! she! who was she? His gloomy look, as these contemplations sank within him, lay fixed on one spot. In restless agitation he had several times thrust his hand into his bosom, and there feeling the

letter, had pressed it closer to his breast. It might be that a rustle of the paper struck upon his neighbour's ear, for a voice behind him said to him softly, "Burn quickly what you already should long since have destroyed." He looked round astonished. An elderly lady who had sat on the same side of the table, and had just left her seat, was passing his chair. Beneath her large bonnet, his met an eye, whose piercing and commanding expression he seemed to recognise. "Was she not the companion of the beautiful maiden on the stairs? and again"—He became quite confused. His nocturnal visitant—he could have sworn it was the same countenance.

"You seem to know the lady?" inquired a gentleman opposite.

"Slightly," he replied, in embarrassment.

"Perhaps an old, scolding aunt," laughed the other jokingly; "who, as she passed, whispered you a reproof."

"You are upon the right track," said the Colonel carelessly, who felt uncomfortable at the strange interference.

"Now," said the other, who was the host, and a jovial man, pleasant to everybody; "the good lady meant no evil. She is from the country, and often travels hither on her way to her relations beyond the Rhine."

"So her appearance is not strange to you?" asked several at the table, whose attention her whisper on passing had attracted.

"So little," returned the host, "that I know by sight all the members of her family, and the reference to the Colonel was well understood by me."

The latter, as entirely convinced of the contrary of what was now said, as of his own existence, startled at first; yet it was not long before the idea occurred to him that the clever inn-keeper, in the confidence of the incomprehensible secret, wished, in a skilful manner, to anticipate the inquiry to which he well knew the very appearance of the lady, and still more her familiar approach to the chair, would excite the attention of the curious. He was the more confirmed in his conjectures, as the talkative man avoided his glance, whilst he spoke at great length concerning the name, rank, and relations of the singular lady. Hereupon, for a while, all made themselves merry with the lady. Her several peculiarities, as her sprightly manner, her bonnet and mantle pushed behind as she sat at table, her way of holding her fan, her hasty and frequent resort

to a large snuff box, her taciturnity while eating, next to the commanding expression of her countenance, were the subject of much conversation and laughter.

Medjerski laughed not. His breast was, in many ways, stormily agitated. He could scarcely await the opportunity of speaking alone with the host, who had so unexpectedly contributed to his right understanding of the matter. At length the table was cleared, the guests were scattered, and the host went to his business. The Colonel availed himself of the general movement; he left the hall with the purpose of obtaining further light in the right direction. To his vexation, he saw himself followed at every step by the man who was deaf and dumb. He seemed determined, at his assigned post, to execute conscientiously the commission he had received. By the alarming vivacity of his features, and the confused hurry of his finger-language, he expressed his impatience and expectation. The Colonel was so disturbed by his demeanour, that, partly to be rid of him, partly to obtain liberty for further measures; and, with the intention of sending some hasty lines to reproach the strangers for his concerted meeting with the mysterious night-walker, gave him a beckon, and ran with him up the stairs. It being already dusky in the side passages, the lamps not yet kindled, Paul absent, and both butler and waiter busy below, the Count had some trouble in the darkness before he could fit the door-lock with the key. Whilst he was still clattering at the door, he heard short, hasty steps approaching, and a voice of anxious emotion whispered—

“For God’s sake! into the very next room! It was he! I recognised him. He is following us. I am undone!”

Medjerski had his hand upon the latch of the door, which, at the same instant opened, as the fugitives followed by their pursuer, rushed with them into his chamber, where, in the absence of lights, they were standing together, all unknown to each other, paralyzed by an involuntary terror, speechless, and in uncertainty, and only recalled to a fearful consciousness, by the hollow, half-brutish efforts of the dumb man’s stammer.

It was not long before a voice from the midst which betrayed the Duke’s presence, exclaimed, “Ah, Natalie! so it was reserved for me to find you again?”

"In vain," she stammered, scarcely mastering her senses, "should I endeavour to deceive you as to my person. Yet," collecting herself, she added in a firmer tone, "what right have you to this? Yes, sir, I am she, I am that Natalie, who in better days was your betrothed; and who now, as an impassable gulf of convictions and principles divides us, is flying with a relation from her father-land to bury herself and her recollections in a distant cloister."

This explanation, which also sensibly affected the Colonel, so entirely occupied the attention of the Duke, that the words; "Now quickly deliver the trunk to the dumb man, and then away with this," were whispered by the maiden in Medjerski's ear, and he was able to assist in fulfilling the purpose. Already the fateful chest was in the destined hands, when Paul entered with two lights so suddenly that the other, in his wild hurry, let fall his entrusted treasure to the ground. At the same moment the lid sprang open, and showed, with the portrait of the queen, letters and parcels that betrayed in whose interests the owners were commissioned. Natalie's companion hesitated not a moment. Stripping off the mask, the Colonel's nocturnal visitant, holding in one hand a small crucifix, which he carried on a rosary at his breast, in the other holding a pistol towards the Duke, advanced to the picture, whilst his kindling eyes, still more than his menacing voice, exclaimed—

"Back! back! in the name of heaven and earth!"

The Duke was visibly astonished; yet the other knew how quite to paralyze him, as with countenance fast set upon him, he added—

"Apostate from the church, as from your anointed king; sooner or later, an offended conscience will avenge the wanton outrage. Horrible youth! my arm is, through higher power, furnished with weapons. Wilt thou, however, betray me and this heroic maiden, who, devoting herself to the service of her mistress, as well as to heaven's, has hitherto been the stay of a persecuted priest, wilt thou, I say, betray us? Come on! I will purchase every step with blood."

Natalie, in the meanwhile, had grasped the Duke's hand. She said only, "Fare thee well!" with an expression of voice, with a look and gesture so beseeching, as almost seemed to sound, "Come with me!" He looked at her quite disarmed, struck both hands over his face, and neither saw nor hindered that she with the

ecclesiastic on her arm gently stole from the room, and soon after left the house.

As now the two were left alone, they sank overpowered into one another's arms. A few hasty words were all that elucidated what still remained mysterious. Was it the sight of the beautiful maiden? was it the influence of a noble, pious disposition, that, true to its faith, at no moment wavered? Suffice it that the Count's republican ardour so gradually cooled in Strasburg, that, after a few days, he proceeded on his journey homeward. The host, it seemed, had informed him as to several particulars; he was well instructed, and in the confidence of the ecclesiastic, who had recourse to him, owing to that mischance with the broken cabriolet and the runaway horse, in order to regain the lost property. How both acted in concert is evident.

At a later period, would the reader know, Natalie had not taken the veil, but the Duke forsook the rebel-party, and took the oath under Condé's banners. After a time, on the hand of his youth's love, he returned to France, where, in the year 1814, he again sought Medjerski at the head of the Russian regiments. Who the ecclesiastic was remained unknown.



Valerie.



FOR several years after the peace of 1763, there lived at Berlin the widow of a bookseller, of the name of Fonrobert, in a high, narrow, dark-looking house, situate at the end of "The Brothers' Street," adjoining St. Peter's Church Yard. The aged lady continued the business of her deceased husband with good success, by the aid of a skilful and honest assistant. Herr Etienne, like his principal, was of the French settlement, and, besides the bonds of nationality, was personally his relative; and being a poor, but useful member of the family in which he had been trained and brought up, he was, at last, as intermediate between confidant and servant, appointed head manager of the business.

During the agitations of the war-time, every species of commerce had suffered manifold shocks: but especially had the field been narrowed for intellectual productions. The spread of French literature, which occasioned such early success to the active, sharp-witted foreigner, must, under the hostile influences of the time, have experienced the most discouraging checks; so that speculation was at a stand, and only diligence and carefulness availed to extricate the business from its heavy and still increasing burdens. Here it was that the sprightly, joyous Fonrobert, ever more disposed to a rash forwardness than to a timid forbearance, especially needed the calmness of his companion. Gentle and

even-tempered in all things, the latter took no useless step, made no ambitious movement, did not reach far forward, though, unperceived, he by small degrees provided for the future; and thus, by such measures, retrieved his temporarily embarrassed vocation.

At a later period, Madame Fonrobert had every reason to be thankful for such a procedure: she saw herself, after the sudden death of her only son, and that which quickly followed, of her husband, supported by a friend, to whom she owed not only the assistance of the moment, but the comfort of a station which exactly corresponded to her modest and peaceful spirit. The mute sorrow of her gentle soul desired nothing more from life than quietness, and an unanxious resignation to the course of outward events. In her first terror she would have fled altogether from the cares of the domestic circle, for she had not the power actively to contend with them; she therefore blessed the hand of the faithful Etienne, who had so easily conducted her out of those days of darkest anguish to the old habits of her former life. Though all within her was as if dead and palsied, yet, without everything remained in place; and, from henceforth, that which one day brought might also be expected from the morrow. Gradually her sorrow subsided into the depths of her soul, and nothing thereof remained for the rest of her life but the need, from long habit, of an unchangeable tranquillity. Nowhere could more order and regularity be seen than prevailed in her house. She seldom left the little back room which immediately adjoined the shop. Herr Etienne spent the greatest part of the day in a small latticed apartment between the two, for the double purpose of being to both places—as circumstances might require—immediately at hand. Here he managed his correspondence, made his calculations, gave and received commissions, and was in all these occupations scarcely ever disturbed by the intrusion of her to whom he had devoted a whole life, full of labour and exertion. Exactly as during the lifetime of her husband, did Madame Fonrobert now remain free from all participation in the affairs of business—as formerly, she only conversed with her kinsman at meal-times, and shewed herself fully content when, now and then, from the nearness of the solitary being, his dry, hectic cough convinced her that she was still connected, through benevolence and gratitude, with the living world.

At six o'clock, in the harvest and winter seasons, the shop was closed; in the longer days this happened an hour later. As soon as the closing doors had creaked into the corners, the bolts been driven, and the iron bars had rattled, the old servant maid arose from her comfortable seat on the chimney hearth, in order to prepare the light supper for her mistress. When she had served it, and placed a seat against the little table, Madame Fonrobert, taking a small hand-bell, gently rang it, which was the accustomed signal to the already waiting company. Immediately the door opened, when, almost unperceived, the quiet man entered, and having made his greeting, noiselessly took his seat; then laying aside his manuscripts and printing toils, he tasked himself to get up an enlivening conversation, which reminded both of better days, and especially of a journey into France, in which Madame Fonrobert had accompanied her husband. This brighter epoch of her existence recurred to her as with the early dawn of youth, and gave to its recalling images a surpassing warmth and liveliness. Involuntarily, the generally inactive fancy of the dull, sickly lady, was thus enlivened; and though she was far removed from encouraging the wish for similar enjoyments, yet she loved whatever might lead back her thoughts to the lighter materials of a harmless gaiety. The repeated requests to continue the conversation—which always began with the words, “You know, Monsieur Etienne”—were by him carefully regarded. He always knew what she wished to be told, and was only silent when, having wiped her fork, she laid it aside as a signal that the meal-time was over: then he left his seat, helped the good Anna to remove the cloth, opened for her the door, which she gently drew after her, filled the drink-cup of the little Bolognese dog, that was frisking and sniffing by his side, poured out for himself a glass of fresh water, which he held in one hand, whilst with the other he took down from the chimney-piece a little oblong chest, by which movement he could seldom prevent the dominoes which it contained from clattering, and Madame Fonrobert’s exclamation, “Aha! our play!” which somewhat displeased him, as he really only contemplated devoting the little pastime to some useful purpose, but did not wish to be mindful of the thing itself. As, however, the same misluck befell him every evening, it came, at last, to belong to the established order of

things, and was not to be omitted. For one short hour, then, the quiet play lasted, only interrupted by the short, husky cough of poor Etienne. After nine o'clock there was seldom a light seen in the widow's chamber.

Contrary to all custom, one rough and stormy evening in autumn, the domino game of the two friendly combatants had been prolonged, through various little stratagems and calculations of the complaisant kinsman, beyond the appointed hour. Madame Fonrobert was in her best humour: she amused herself in watching for the failure of her wary opponent, and laughed almost audibly whenever she had the good fortune to catch him. While she was considering her play, she was suddenly terrified by the growling of the little dog, which, from lying behind her on the sofa cushion, sprang up, and as, from the approach of something strange, began, first in a low tone, then more briskly, to bark. She looked about after him in astonishment, and endeavoured to quiet him. But quick as lightning the little beast flew by her, into a side-chamber that stood open, and where the windows looked toward the street. Formerly the deceased Fonrobert had occupied this room; it was now empty, yet the affectionate spouse loved to have it opened and lighted of an evening. In the strangest emotion she followed the dog, which kept springing from chair and table on to the window-board, and barking out still more vehemently against the panes. Amidst the noise hereby occasioned, there was plainly distinguishable the moaning voice of a human being crying for help. At the same moment the house-bell was rung with such violence, that Madame Fonrobert, so accustomed to quietness, trembled in every limb, and sinking on a chair, could imagine nothing else than that, in the midst of peace, the enemy was breaking into the unguarded capital. The same terror again agitated her, as again it rang, and more vehemently. Herr Etienne had already a light, and the house-key in his hand, when his relative, with disturbed mien, stammered out, "Where are you going? to the robbers and incendiaries, who are storming the house? For God's sake stay here—stay here, Etienne!"

"Some one is calling for help," he replied softly, bowed, and in an instant was out at the door.

"Now it is all over with us!" exclaimed Madame Fonrobert, as

Anna rushed into the room to inquire the cause of the unwonted tumult. "The Russians and Hungarians are here again! they will plunder all the houses! and whoever opposes them is doomed to death!"

"The Hungarians!" screamed Anna, as if demented, whilst she covered her head with her upraised apron. With hurried steps the book-keeper now approached them; he thrust his head in at the door, beheld the two frantic women, and in perplexity asked, in a low and uncertain tone, "Dare I, madam?—A helpless creature begs for your protection."

"What can I do?" replied Madame Fonrobert, starting back in terror.

"Protect grace and innocence," was the modest answer.

"Force their persecutors here to us; who will then escape from their revenge?" exclaimed the lady.

"Anguish and want are the persecutors," replied Etienne: "these will remain without, if we allow the persecuted to come in."

With these words he entered the room, dragging after him, almost by main-force, a sobbing, trembling young maiden.

"What!" exclaimed Madame Fonrobert, quite angry, "is it a child that has made all this alarm? and are you bringing the impetuous little creature into our quiet house?"

She said this and more, softly and hastily in her mother-tongue, partly because she was accustomed to use this to her relative, and partly not to be understood by the unwelcome guest. However, immediately after the first words the little maiden raised her head with an astonished air, and fixing upon her her fine dark eyes, full of intelligent expression, replied quickly and passionately in the same language—

"Ah! do not fear, madam; I do not wish to be burdensome to any one here. I only ask for a glass of water to moisten the tongue of a dying woman."

She could scarcely pass the last words over her quivering lips; whilst, at the same time, the beseeching and vehement motion of her uplifted hands showed how ardently she desired the accomplishment of that little wish. Herr Etienne hastened to do as she desired, whilst Madame Fonrobert, most deeply agitated by the strange expression of the beautiful child, repeated with every token of sympathy—

"A dying woman! For God's sake where, then? pray tell, my poor maiden. Who is dying, and where?"

Unable to repress her tears, she replied by pointing with upraised arm toward the street; and Etienne, drawing on his coat, ran with her to the door.

"Go with them, Anna," said her mistress; "see what happens, and bring me word."

A murmuring and bustle in the street, occasioned by the concourse of a multitude, drew, at the same time, Madame Fonrobert to the window. She opened it, and heard from several voices—

"Death on the spot! The thunder-clap must have struck her!"

"No one can know that, certainly," interposed a young man, who with difficulty had made his way through the crowd, and who added with officious confidence, "Only into the nearest house with the unfortunate! There must be means employed for her preservation."

Starting, and vainly contending with the aversion to such a strange and horrible sight, Madame Fonrobert beheld immediately the stiff corpse of a lifeless female drawn over her threshold, and into the very room where she was, as being the nearest to the house-door. The faithful Etienne hastened towards the painful object, and seizing with mute and pacifying gesture both the hands of his benefactress, he seemed to invoke, in the name of Providence, forgiveness for the misfortune which in so unforeseen a manner had befallen her. He gently urged her away from the place where she was standing, and tried to turn her look from that strange and startling countenance. But the terrified lady once aroused from the peaceful course of her gentler feelings, was riveted in fevered stupefaction on the object which infused into her soul the deadliest anguish. Meanwhile, could anything reconcile her to the involuntary cause of so great disturbance of the household, it was the still, resigned features of the softly sleeping woman, whom no medical skill, no art of surgeon could awaken. Quite sunk from the weakness of age, there lay on a hand-barrow, in the middle of the room, surrounded by idlers and strangers, a small, slender female form, with a foreign physiognomy, now as unconscious as painless. Her glazed eye no longer regarded the stiff and motionless child, that seemed to ask herself and the men around her what had happened. A momentary silence, which even the

rudest did not venture to interrupt, held in restraint all questions and surmises. Here, however, the unfortunate one could not remain. But who was she? and on whom was the burden and expense of the interment to fall? Was she a poor person of the town, or a nameless stranger of whom no one could give any account? All this passed with lightning-speed through the minds of the bystanders.

Most men think aloud, and, as the natural contemplations occurred to each one, there ran through the little apartment corresponding expressions to the ear of Madame Fonrobert, who, undecided and anxious, watched the entire procedure. As now, in the meantime, an officer of police entered, and made preparations for removing the dead body to the Town-hall, where it should remain exposed till some relative, or at least acquaintance, might recognise it, and tell the name and station of the deceased; as he fixed the space of two days for this purpose, and declared that in case of entire desertion, it would, as belonging to the class of the common poor, be buried as such, the magnanimous lady stepped forward with the assurance that "she would not suffer that any who as God's poor had passed her threshold, in order, in her peaceful little house, quietly to fall asleep, should thence be torn away to the rude gaze of starers, and at last, without kindness or sympathy, be put under the earth. Here shall the departed one remain undisturbed. Public notice can be given of the event. If any demand her who have a nearer claim, then indeed every stranger will be exempted from further obligation; but as the matter now stands, let that person be and remain her last protectress, to whose care Heaven has commended her."

Madame Fonrobert spoke this warmly and rapidly. She was in unwonted excitement; her self-denial had given her new courage. She was quite absorbed in the strange affair, and heeded nothing else. The police-officer bowed respectfully towards her; Herr Etienne occasionally kissed her hand with great emotion. The stranger child beheld all with an air of astonishment. Her striking appearance next excited the observation of those present. Clad in a short petticoat of variegated red silk, thickly quilted and in rich folds, she was leaning against the staves of the hand-barrow. Her black mantelet, drawn about her neck, hung loosely over only one

shoulder, thus displaying a full-flowered bosom-dress, with short sleeves down to the elbows, and fringed with lace. Her wonderfully beautiful thick black hair, glittered with several hair-pins, with which it was fastened together; and this was surmounted by a raised circular gauze cap, such as was wont to be worn at that time by children of distinction. From this mixture of affluence and poverty gleamed a languid, half-opened eye, full of gloomy quiet and mute abstraction. The fine, delicate features were almost motionless, yet betrayed by their expression that sorrow which is too dignified to vent itself loudly. Short and slender, the singular little figure made it doubtful in other respects whether one should call her beautiful and attractive, or only strange and extraordinary. It was, besides, manifest that the poor maiden understood as good as nothing of what was spoken around her; this was clearly shewn when the police-officer, after a short, private conversation with Madame Fonrobert, stepped up to her and asked her whether the woman that had so suddenly died was her mother. The little girl looked embarrassed at Etienne, who complaisantly repeated to her the question in French; to which she replied—

“No, sir; but I never knew any other.”

“Who art thou, then, and where is thy home?” he continued.

The child remained mute for some time, while from her fixed staring eyes ran two big tears, without the muscles of her countenance betraying any visible emotion. “Must I answer that?” she then said, firmly and stedfastly. “This one would once have answered for me,” she added, softly, and with outstretched hand pointing towards the dead. “Now—” She stopped; her lips quivered, yet she did not weep.

“Confide in me,” said the kind Etienne, while at the same time he led her backward a few steps, and urged her to sit down by his side. “Tell me all, my dear child,” he whispered to her secretly. “I will then speak for thee; and to those who have a right to inquire more closely after the circumstances of thy life I will communicate what is necessary for them to know, not more—on that you may rely.”

The child looked full at him. “I have nothing to conceal,” she replied, proudly and drily; “it only troubles me to think on the past, and therefore I do so unwillingly.”

Etienne, astonished at the cool and thoughtful answer, contemplated her more closely; and almost uncertain, as it seemed, whether so much earnestness could well abide in the child-like little creature, he asked her, "How old art thou, young maiden? I do not comprehend thee."

"I am going into my eleventh year," she replied, without regarding the flattering import of the question.

"And who art thou? may I further ask?" said Etienne, urgently. "Who were thy parents, and how camest thou hither?"

She sighed, and then said plaintively—"I was born on the battle-field of Minden, where my father fell under the Duke de Broglio, and where my mother, in despair, had followed to look after his corpse. A market-woman brought me up, and has informed me that I am a Colonel's daughter, and that my mother was a German lady." With these words she felt in her pocket, which was skillfully hid beneath the folds of her dress, and drew forth a small packet, from which she carefully unfolded a fine handkerchief, and shewed to Etienne a name inscribed with a Count's coronet. After this she opened the little packet, and took out a bracelet, with the miniature of a fine, manly countenance; which having contemplated awhile, she handed with two descriptive papers to the good-natured man who had declared himself as her protector. Etienne glanced over the papers. One was the poor orphan's certificate of baptism, and contained the names of two families that seemed to forbid the notion of so young a creature living in want and misery. The second paper threw light upon the other. The unfortunate spouse of the handsome foreigner was, on his account, removed from her family; a secret marriage rendered their union equivocal before the world, and she was exiled from her native land. In the deepest anguish of soul, she wrote this to the author of her affliction, whom amid reproach and sorrow she had followed for some little distance, when the news of that disastrous battle overtook her. Concealing the letter in her bosom, she hastened to the battle-field. This and what follows was added in worse handwriting on the margin of the paper—probably the compassionate market-woman had undertaken this task. She had noted that the unfortunate lady had expired by the side of her husband, after giving birth to the child;

that she had confided the latter to her, and that never should little Valerie be forsaken by her.

"Canst thou read?" asked Etienne, folding the papers together.

"Yes," was the short reply.

"And thou knowest—?" he continued, hesitatingly. She nodded assent. "Forget it," said he, beseechingly. "It nought avails thee to remain in this condition wherein thou hast been nurtured." Valerie answered nothing. "But yet do tell me one thing," he said, already on the point of reverting to other matters—"Wert thou always in Germany? or how is it that I see thee here?"

"The good old woman," replied the child, smilingly, "begged for me in France and other parts, where she ought never to have led me. Now she wished to make trial of the great Frederic. The family of my mother belongs to his vassals; but death has destroyed this plan also."

"Forget this too," Etienne again besought her; "forget all!" She answered nothing. He led her back to Madame Fonrobert, to whom he made known the substance of his conversation with Valerie, and induced the compassionate lady to receive her into the house, which put a stop to the police inquiries; and after the interment of the French mendicant, as the deceased woman was called, the occurrence soon came to be forgotten.

CHAPTER II.

THE feverish excitement which, that evening, had set the even-tempered Madame Fonrobert into an almost passionate condition, left a languor which preyed in a distressing manner upon her spirit. That readiness with which she had joined her first act of benevolence to a second, and so added one self-conquest to another, belonged obviously to a strange energy, which, with the incident that produced it, also passed away. The following morning, therefore, brought her a troop of disturbing contemplations, of which one half sufficed to poison the life of the quiet-loving woman. She was ashamed indeed to make known her

feelings : it seemed to her mean and ungenerous to betray untimely regrets over an act of benevolence ; yet, scarcely mistress of her inward anguish, she poured forth a flood of bitter tears without revealing the ground of her sorrow. So long as the careful Etienne was occupied with the preparations for the funeral, and for the reception of the new guest, he could pass over her discordant humour ; but, with the return of the quiet belonging to his ordinary way of life, it was impossible for him to look silently on such a change. He ventured therefore, one lonely evening-hour, when Valerie was sleeping in Anna's little chamber—he ventured the timid question, " Oh, madam, has any bad news arrived, or has any loss been sustained, to cause you sorrow ? " She silently shook her head. " It is doubtless very bold," he continued, " that I should wish to intrude myself into your confidence, but impute it somewhat to the fear that, through some failure, I may have deserved your displeasure ; and at least deem me worthy of the favour of some explanation."

" It is not that, my dear Etienne," replied Madame Fonrobert, with weak and tremulous voice, " it is not that ; but, as you speak of it, and we are now without burdensome affairs—which, alas ! will henceforth seldom be the case—I will venture to tell you. I have feared that we have been too hasty. Yes, I fear that we have imposed upon ourselves a family-cross that will grievously oppress us ; and which, Herr Etienne, will crush me to death."

While she spoke, he several times changed colour ; and as, at last, tears stifled her voice, he was obliged hastily to take two or three pinches from his box, to refrain himself from weeping with her. " How then," he at length said, " does madam think that little Valerie can wish to be burdensome to her ? "

" Burdensome ! " she exclaimed. " Ah ! that is not the question ; that she will and must be by her mere presence. But if that were all — " She ceased. Perhaps she herself knew not further what lay darkly within her mind. Yet suddenly there rose involuntarily to her lips, " See you, Herr Etienne, I have the feeling that this child brings unhappiness to us. I become so anxious when near her, that I know not how to express it. In her large eyes there is something presaging sorrow. Only once contemplate her more closely ; hers is surely no child's look. She was

born in an evil hour, upon a bloody bed, amongst the dying. Think only, how many souls must there have fluttered about in unrest, and been by angels and devils snatched away; and, in the midst of the confusion, hers wound its way into the light."

The perplexed book-keeper rose from his chair, in inexpressible embarrassment, and paced up and down, twisting and rubbing his hands. The strange words had excited in him a feeling of aversion and indignation towards the innocent object of his inmost compassion; and yet the more this feeling overpowered him the more he was ashamed of it, and strove against it, which occasioned him infinite suffering. "Besides," Madame Fonrobert continued, "the little unfortunate is, in her singular position, more matured than other children at her age. It is only her form that is undeveloped; and by what a hand has she been cultivated? What principles may she not have imbibed from vulgar associations? Think only what she could learn from such a creature, with what else become acquainted than with what is immodest and untractable. Herr Etienne! Herr Etienne! believe me, this good old house has lost its peace."

"Then we will get rid of the stranger," he exclaimed, overpowered with disquiet and anxiety, yet shocked at the hasty word which consigned to so unhappy a fate one who was quite forlorn.

"That we cannot without injuring ourselves," she observed thoughtfully. "What would the world judge of such an unjust procedure? And how we should lower the poor maiden in the opinion of others!" Etienne felt more calm. "No," continued his old friend, "the matter no longer concerns others. We have been too precipitate, and must now await the end."

This *we* really meant *you*, and was a disguised reproach which the too sensitive Etienne took very pleasantly, but was much vexed therewith in secret. Therefore he kept silence, whilst he once more thought over the matter. Many opposing considerations now hastily occurred to him, which he seemed not before to have sufficiently regarded. What if he really through a single evening should have entailed on the house, which owed to his management its prosperity and peace, a lasting disadvantage, and on his benefactress anxiety and vexation. "I will take the entire burden on myself" said he resolutely. "Valerie shall find in me a father, a teacher, and a pro-

tector; she shall have the little room above on the third floor, which I have so long occupied; the little chamber beside the shop will do for me. The homeless wanderer does not need waiting upon; she has been early schooled by want. By day she shall work with me in the counting-house, and only during the short meal-time need Madame Fonrobert be near her." He immediately made the latter acquainted with his plan, released her from all obligation, and declared himself as ready as he was bound to take it all upon himself. But, to his great astonishment, this did not at all satisfy her. The deadening impression which had fallen upon her had deprived her dull imagination of all its quickening power.

"What will all that avail?" she replied. "What has been, has been: the child will never again be absent from my thoughts."

At the same time she was not unwilling that Valerie should occupy the little upper room, while Etienne should have possession of Herr Fonrobert's, from which since the terror of that evening, the delusive breath of earlier recollections had passed away. A waiting-girl, who now and then attended upon Anna, agreed to have her sleeping-room next to Valerie's chamber. And thus the stranger child was accommodated with the least possible disturbance to the customs of the household. For this she thanked her benefactor from her heart. A stranger to everything, she had no longing for the world; besides, her disturbed frame needed rest. She slept much, and even when awake dreamt of that with which her deceased nurse had filled her childish mind. At table she appeared reserved and distant towards Madame Fonrobert, who to her was almost painfully kind and solicitous; and who, the more she felt discommoded by the approach of her little guest, the more redoubled her attentions towards her. They remained, however, unknown to each other; their intercourse was only kept alive by that which had first originated it, namely, their language.

Valerie long desired to learn German; she had a fine and agreeable manner of expressing herself; the lighter tones of thought glided so smoothly over her lips, and found in the harmonious play of her features an accompaniment that seemed to render both inseparable. Etienne at all times avoided imposing any strange and disturbing notions on the unintelligible child; he therefore let her take her own way, and be as she was, quiet as to herself, buried in

her own feelings, sparing in their expression. What course her education took it would have been difficult to estimate: outwardly, she appeared unchanged; thus she lived for years. She had no play-mates, nor wished for any; nor could she attain any taste for female occupations. Proper hours of study eluded her; yet she knew the most of what is usually taught to girls domestically educated. The habit of sitting the greatest part of the day by the side of Etienne, turning over the stores of the book-shop, and reading historical and poetical works of a religious and moral tendency, raised her above the mechanical condition of a common elementary development. And if, in the confusion of accidental impressions, her notions and judgments lay sometimes disordered, they yet struck out upon a path in which it was very difficult to accompany her. Least could the modest Etienne here follow her, who could only proceed step by step, when he would understand any direction, and whose sensitive mind was sickened by the slightest ebullition of feeling; and therefore he often sought Madame Fonrobert's forgiveness for the haste with which he had recommended the stranger to her generosity. It is true that his attachment daily increased for the lovely and highly-born maiden, in whom, much as he had contemplated her, he had not been able to discover any fault which could reproach him for this inclination; and yet the more his satisfaction arose from Valerie's society, the more ashamed he felt on that account, and the more carefully he measured and regulated his behaviour towards her. Indeed, he held himself aloof just in proportion as he realized the nearness of her presence. Madame Fonrobert, on her part, glad that matters went so favourably for the peace of her household, disturbed no one in ought that kept other considerations away from her. All these circumstances, combined together, caused the soul of Valerie, in the midst of the busy capital, to be as lonesome in the benevolent family, as had she been on a desolate island, where only the echo of her own voice from wild and uncultured nature had struck upon her ear. She might have been about the age of fifteen, when Etienne surprised her one day at a side book-case, containing only German authors; Valerie, a small volume in her hand, was reading without observing him, half aloud, with all the signs of excited

attention, mingled with terror and astonishment, the following words :—

“ Ah, see ! ah, see ! I suddenly
Behold a fearful wonder ;
A horseman's raiment all despoil'd,
And torn, and worn asunder ;
His manly head a skull become,
A naked skull ! Ah, frightful doom !
His body, once so full and fair,
A shrivell'd skeleton lies there —”

Etienne interrupted her. “ Do you understand what you are reading ?” said he. “ Since when have you learned German, Mademoiselle Valerie ?”

She let fall her hand which held the book, and contemplating with dreamy look the images which then passed before her, she said, “ Oh, a long time, Herr Etienne ; the old servant always speaks it to me, and lets me read in her song-book ; it is quite familiar to me in the hearing, but I express myself awkwardly in the strange language.”

“ And this frightful poem,” continued he. “ Who gave it you ?”

“ I took it myself,” she drily replied, adding immediately, “ I believe it was written for me. It makes my hair stand on end ; my skin is cold as ice, but my heart, Herr Etienne, my heart never beat so warmly as at this moment.”

His own heart felt strangely at these words. He perceived something inexplicable as his half-sunk eye met hers with its dark, quivering beam. He started back, as if he had suddenly seen a strange and unknown form stand before him, and endeavoured, under a forced smile, to conceal the aversion which only more strongly influenced him, as she now with passionate inspiration again took up the book, and repeated with elevated tone :—

“ Ah, see ! ah, see ! I suddenly—,”

“ Lay aside that wild stuff, Mademoiselle,” said the agitated Etienne, beseechingly ; “ you will only bewilder your imagination with it.”

“ No,” replied Valerie ; “ I can explain it to myself, only hear :—

‘ Loud wailings from the upper air,
And moanings from beneath ;
Leonora's heart with trembling fear
Shook betwixt life and death.’

Say now," asked the agitated maiden ; " is not that the history of my mother ?" And then, she continued : " Was not thus the hour of my birth ?—

‘ And now, amid the shadows pale,
Beneath the pale moon glance,
The spectres chant a fearful wail,
And whirl their horrid dance.’ ”

" I conjure you," Etienne interrupted her, " throw the book into the fire. It is madness that you are reading. Oh, the imprudent one," he sighed, " to impress on your weak brain such horrible images of the past !"

" Do not blame the old woman," said Valerie ; " she has given me here a kind home. And were this only a chamber of death, it is a spot upon the earth," she added, with deep melancholy, " where I feel at peace."

She had, in the meanwhile, concealed the book, without Etienne venturing to hinder her ; he only shook his head, and gazed after her as she went up stairs with it to her own chamber. He was obliged to confess that, since her coming into the house, she had not before so unreservedly disclosed her inward mind ; but had ever avoided revealing it to a stranger's eye. But now astonished, and ravished by an overwhelming power, the true voice of a wounded and diseased soul had broken forth. Those hard, wild tones were they that had ever struck dumbly within her ; at length she had found words for their utterance. The voice of the mother whispered them to her in the proper language.

Etienne involuntarily shuddered at this coincidence of strange occurrences. For the first time, he could not to-day feel right in his simple occupation. With a disturbed mind he took his place later at the dinner-table, opposite Madame Fonrobert. He almost felt thankful that Valerie did not make her customary appearance. She had excused herself from illness, but he could easily guess the true reason, which made him thoughtful and taciturn.

Madame Fonrobert observed the change in him. She probably ascribed it to Valerie's absence, for what fluttered convulsively on her lips, and was betrayed by an inward smile, seldom came out openly, as she generally kept her thoughts to herself. Therefore she only slightly hinted that her table companion had not become

more sprightly, and seemed to be pre-occupied by one exclusive idea.

"It will be agreeable to her," she added, "when she can learn to communicate her thoughts."

At these words he looked at her with astonishment; not understanding her meaning.

"I would," she continued, "that you told me plainly what plans you are projecting. Besides, it were better at once to take the first step, and so spare me the trouble of further inquiries."

"Good God!" exclaimed Etienne, seized with anxious foreboding; "what plans could I form, which in the least could concern my personal interest? And how have I deserved, madam, that you should think me guilty of a secret intention?"

"Gently, my friend, gently," she softly replied; "the zeal which you show for your justification could almost make me mistrustful of your integrity. But I will not disquiet you. The simple question now is, whether you think of occupying, in a short time, the middle story, which since the deceased Herr Fonrobert's time has remained shut up."

"I make a change in your house?" asked the affrighted Etienne, who did not comprehend what she intended.

"I thought," she replied, "if you should marry."

The words died upon his ear; he thought himself dreaming, when she added—

"See! Valerie is grown fully to the age of fifteen; after my death you are my heir. What will you that you delay the period when you may be happy? What I see in the future, I can also endure at the present. And then, at least, I shall have the consolation of knowing that matters will be hereafter as I have directed, and that nothing new will subvert the ancient order."

"Is it possible?" stammered the bookkeeper, in a perplexity which half arose from astonishment, half from inexpressible embarrassment; "is it possible that you deem me guilty, at my age, of so great a folly? Ay, Heaven forbid me from harbouring wishes for which I should only blush! How ungenerous, willingly to consign the blooming young maiden to a sickly, consumptive husband, whose infirm health more weds him to death than to life. No, no, Madame Fonrobert, no more of this, I beg," he added

quickly, as if he could not with sufficient haste dismiss an imagination to whose impression he could pay no regard.

Madame Fonrobert was silent awhile, without showing any signs of surprise at his answer. After a long pause, during which Etienne endeavoured to collect himself, she said calmly—

“Very good, my dear Etienne; but what then will, in the end, become of Valerie? She has appeared to me for some time past more melancholy and reserved than before; she is too lonely here with us.”

“Indeed!” responded Etienne, hesitatingly.

“It will then be well,” she continued, “for me to accept the offer of my brother-in-law the surgeon, who, with his only daughter is coming to Berlin from Cleves, and who wishes to lodge with me. I would at once have agreed to this, but I wished first to know your intentions; for had you——”

“I am not at all worth considering in any of your arrangements,” said he, hastily interrupting her, that he might not again be disquieted with the proposal.

“My niece, Philline, is about the same age as Valerie,” observed Madame Fonrobert; “they will teach each other what they mutually require to learn. Much can be regulated in our foster-child, through intercourse with persons of her own age; besides,” added she, “the new guests will be welcome to you, my friend, as age is ever taciturn, and Valerie is a dreamer.”

He could not but grant this; and as he was glad to see her busied with another object, he obtained leave to write immediately to the surgeon, and to make the necessary preparations for his arrival. The many particulars which the precise lady prescribed for this purpose, and for the security of her own repose, gave her active assistant abundant occupation. He thereby lost sight of the lonely young dreamer, who kept apart in her own little chamber. To his joy, however, he next morning found in its place in the bookcase, the dangerous poem, which he had so unwillingly seen in the hands of the excited maiden; he immediately took it away, and locked it up. Valerie smiled, when afterwards she observed this, but forbore from any remark.

After several weeks, the surgeon arrived with his daughter. He was an earnest, learned man, quite devoted to his studies, of stirring

industry, and untiring investigation. As soon as he had unpacked and arranged his books, his chemical and surgical apparatus, every thing stood in its place; he found his own occupation in a spacious room in the midst of embryos in spirits, skulls, skeletons, and other scientific indispensables, so that his presence in the house was but little noticed.

It was otherwise with Philline. Sprightly as a roe, communicative, sportful, and ever ready to sacrifice herself and friends for a joke; now she pursued her pranks with the old tedious Anna, now with her aunt's Bolognese dog; with her aunt herself, and the pale, coughing, house-spectre, as she was wont to call Etienne, while she spared Valerie, whose coldness affrighted her, and towards whom, therefore, she felt more reluctance than confidence. Their mutual intercourse remained a long time sufficiently restrained. Wearisomeness, at last, induced Philline to seek her young companion in her own little chamber. She found her sitting idly in a corner, and repeating in a loud voice some verses, which her visitor did not at all understand. The thought to play a comedy arose immediately from this incident in the mind of the sportive Philline. She communicated her notion to the other, but as they were entirely without the necessary means and characters, they contented themselves with learning scenes from tragedies (for Valerie liked only the tragical), and reciting them with much pathos before the deaf and silent walls. The scanty pleasure, enlivened neither by the sympathy nor admiration of beholding friends, could be of no long entertainment for the social, sprightly Philline; she was at all times restless and ill at ease in Valerie's little room, and it was only not to disturb her father that she had hitherto resorted thither to unfold her dramatic talent.

Fully content with her accomplishments in the art, she resolved to give both her father and the other members of the household an astonishing proof of it. Valerie was not to be wanting. During the hours when the surgeon took his circuit in the city, the daughter desired to make all preparations for the little festival in her apartment, and for this purpose invited Valerie to accompany her there, which the latter had with singular anxiety avoided; nor could she to-day subdue her reluctance. Alternately changing red and pale, she stammered out excuses, not one of which was compre-

hended by the other, who almost forcibly drew the trembling maiden after her. But scarcely had they approached the door, which was standing open, and which led to the surgeon's room, and scarcely had Valerie cast a single glance therein, than, with distorted countenance, she uttered a terrific cry, and rushed breathless from the spot. Philline, first frightened, then angry, followed her, scolding and blaming, and overwhelmed her with such bitter reproaches, that the former in excited vehemency revealed the reason of her conduct, which she had rather have kept secret, saying, with bewildered look—

“Do with me what you will, but never can I pass the skeletons which grin at me from your father's glass case.”

Philline burst out into loud laughter. Familiar with the objects of so great terror, she was as deficient in the notion of it, as in sympathy with the emotion, and she knew not the sad circumstances of Valerie's birth in the field of carnage.

“Is it possible,” she exclaimed, “that you are so little above the prejudices of the lower classes as to be overcome in this manner by the impression of what you are not accustomed to?”

“Do not mock me,” replied Valerie, deathly pale, and trembling as an aspen leaf; “I cannot help it. Once before, I stood at the same spot, as your father was coming out. I had not time fully to recollect myself. Quick as thought my eye had strayed towards those horrid forms. I carried about with me the sensation of them for days together.”

At this Philline again openly laughed in her face. She understood her so little, that she sported in the most heartless manner with the most pitiable of all weaknesses, as she termed the poor maiden's unconquerable aversion, and exposed her to the like blame from all who had any regard to her tale of the laughable incident. Etienne's tender soul suffered much from the strokes of the inexhaustible raillery which befell the object of his protection, yet he ventured not to defend her as his sympathy desired, from fear that the fine texture of her mind might in another way be discomposed by unpleasant emotions. Especially since his last conversation with Madame Fonrobert, had his demeanour towards the young girl been far more circumspect than before. She also but seldom now came into the shop to look for a

book. 'When on one occasion Etienne remarked this to her, referring at the same time to that poem which had once so much inflamed her, she seemed vexed, and answered him shortly—"that she did not want the volume any more."

This, and similar answers, had quite turned Etienne from his former custom of being her defender on all occasions. He now, therefore, took no part against Philline's attacks, which induced her father to interpose. He felt deeply interested in the extraordinary young creature, through a strange impression which she had made upon him. He said he thought he saw something like a shadow upon her brow, as if by accident a dark body were sportively hovering over her; a phenomenon he had often observed in persons strangely organized, or who were destined by Providence to violent events. With this opinion regarding her, he declared the jestings of his daughter to be ungenerous, indeed, even silly, inasmuch as the peculiar seat of innate aversions can as little be ascertained as that of many secret diseases; and, therefore, such manifestations are rightly no more to be laughed at than are the contortions of spasm.

This medical judgment, far from restraining Philline, only stimulated her spirit of contradiction; and whether it was to revenge herself for the spoiling of her comedy, or by a bold joke, in defiance of opposite counsel, to bring the laugh upon her own side, she resolved, at all hazards, to cure Valerie of her imaginary fears. One Sunday evening, when the old servant slept out at her daughter's, who dwelt outside the gate, Philline contrived during supper, with the help of her own maid, to remove one of the skeletons from her father's closet, and conceal it under Valerie's bed-clothes. Full of the expected result, her merriment rose above all restraint; even Valerie was infected by it, who therefore later than usual retired to her own chamber.

Madame Fonrobert detained her friend Etienne awhile longer. She was agreeably excited by the favourable alteration which she thought she saw in her foster-child, and communicated to her good kinsman her observations thereupon.

"Philline works very well upon Valerie, Herr Etienne," said she, with an air of self-satisfaction; "very well. Did you see, to-day, how unconstrainedly she fell in with the other's wit, and returned

it? I think we may congratulate ourselves upon my resolution of inviting here these pleasant people."

She looked smilingly over to Etienne, who, silent, and listening with the greatest attention to an obscure noise, was standing aside with his face toward the door.

"You do not understand me well?" she abruptly asked; at the same moment, however, starting up from the sofa, and seizing his hands with the words—

"God! my God! what is the matter? You are pale as death!"

"Nothing—nothing!" whispered Etienne; "it is surely nothing; but I thought I heard some one screaming in anguish."

He had scarcely said this, when Philline rushed wildly into the room, with staring look, shrieking vehemently—

"She has lost her senses! Help, Heaven! she is caressing the skeleton, and speaking words of madness to it!"

More was not necessary to drive Etienne to Valerie's chamber. Already before he entered, he heard her in quite an altered tone, more scream than speak. She was repeating in a breath, the horrible ballad, and at the place,

"Ah, see! ah, see! I suddenly
Behold a fearful wonder"—

she fell into such a wild ecstasy, that Etienne burst open the door, thinking she would not survive the next moment. He found the unfortunate one erect in bed, and embracing the skeleton in her arms with a joy as if she had now found the happiness of her life. The surgeon, who was present, and who ascertained the particulars from Philline's painful confession, found that, after the ill-planned joke, she had stood before the door to observe Valerie; and seeing her, when undressed, quietly approach her bed, and express no terror nor reluctance, she foreboded some misfortune. Full of anxiety she then entered, and found her pitiaibly deprived of her senses, softly whispering and playing with the object of her former horror. The surgeon immediately gave up hope; and Etienne soon perceived that she had imagined herself to be her mother, who had again found the long-lamented object of her love. Madame Fonrobot's forebodings were now fully realized. The peace of her house had departed. She herself did not long survive the last blow. The

surgeon also in a short time left the dwelling, in order to rescue his daughter from entire ruin; for, since that evening, health and cheerfulness had both forsaken her. Her father was often heard to repeat, that he had never thought that the bones of a dead warrior, which he had once brought from the battle-field of Minden, could have prevailed over the reason of two maidens.

Etienne was vividly penetrated with these words. Involuntarily, unanswerable questions pressed his spirit, yet he avoided the wish vainly to inquire after the hidden cause of such mysterious connections. He bore his lot quietly and patiently. For long years he remained the possessor of the little house, the lonely supporter of the unhappy Valerie. Her gloomy lamp was every evening seen glimmering from the bow-window. The passer-by sent up to heaven a short prayer for her salvation. She herself sang and toyed with her phantom, till once the moon shone in at the open window, and lightened upon the coffin, in which her bones by the side of those that had been disturbed, found rest and peace.



